

1994

## Social and economic aspects of eighteenth-century housing on the northern neck of Virginia

Camille Wells

*College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences*

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the northern neck of Virginia**

**Wells, Camille, Ph.D.**

**The College of William and Mary, 1994**

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SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY HOUSING  
ON THE NORTHERN NECK OF VIRGINIA

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History  
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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Camille Wells

1994

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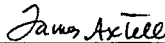
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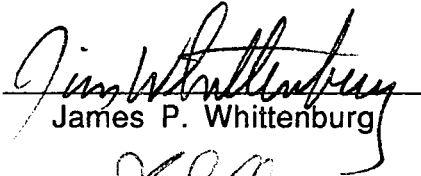


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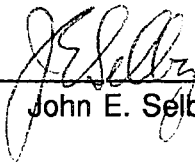
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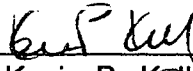
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Colonial Williamsburg Foundation



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This study is dedicated with love and gratitude  
to my mother  
Jean Ann Bradley Wells  
and to the memory of my father  
Carey Teague Wells, Jr.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I undertook this study on account of my conviction that old buildings are rich, complex, and often neglected sources of historical information. No less than the newspapers, letters, wills, tax lists, and census records on which historians traditionally rely, buildings can suggest, reveal, or confirm the general contours and exquisite subtleties of life as it was known to the people who made and used them. But buildings in all their sprawling and towering three-dimensionality are demanding subjects of inquiry. Most of the information they contain is cunningly encoded, and much of it makes sense only in light of corresponding documents. Furthermore, through their fourth dimension--because they bear the additions, subtractions, alterations, and concealments of the intervening years--they will mislead the overconfident or unwary. So this dissertation, based as it is on my determination to find and study every surviving eighteenth-century house that survives in each of the four eastern counties of Virginia's Northern Neck, claimed six years of fieldwork and archival research as well as two years more of analysis and writing.

During that time, I was helped along my way by many generous forms of institutional support. The Department of History at the College of William and Mary demonstrated sustained confidence in me through several teaching fellowships and with office space where I worked productively for several years amidst congenial and supportive colleagues. A Minor Research Grant from William and Mary's Committee on Faculty Research helped pay for my travel. Like

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Perhaps there is no better demonstration of how the study of buildings can draw us toward compelling and rewarding insights about people and their ways of life than that through the preparation of this dissertation I met, learned from, and enjoyed the company of an impressively and delightfully large number of people. Between 1986 when I began this study and 1991 when my fieldwork was at last complete, many residents of the Northern Neck became my advisors, guides, and friends. As president and vice president of Northumberland Preservation Incorporated, Robert Byrne and Henry Lane Hull were early supporters of my enterprise. Elizabeth Laurent, former curator at the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation in Westmoreland County, gave me a copy of her master's thesis--a study of architectural form and finish among colonial and



antebellum houses of the Northern Neck--and generously shared insights drawn from the work she had so recently completed. Jim Carter of Jim and Pat Carter Real Estate tested my newly acquired knowledge of the region he knows so well and put me in touch with the owners of several significant houses. Virginia Sherman introduced me to almost everything worth knowing about colonial architecture in Westmoreland County. Robert McKenney, president of the Northumberland County Historical Society, shared his considerable understanding of the Northern Neck's architectural past--it was his documentary sleuthing alone that rescued the vanished Morattico in Lancaster County from oblivion. Kraig Peyton helped me think in new ways about some important Richmond County sites, and he reinforced my enthusiasm for documentary research and architectural fieldwork with his own. Robert Carter Ball enlivened several of my fieldtrips with his company, he kindly insured my access to Hurstville and Ditchley in Northumberland County, and he drew my attention to several early houses in Lancaster County as well. Carolyn Jett was likewise generous with the fruits of her documentary study of the Northern Neck's early houses--especially Ditchley, Hurstville, and Roadview. After I moved to Michigan, she was kind enough to track down missing links in my chains of title for four important houses. Dwight Storke, director of George Washington's Birthplace National Monument in Westmoreland County gave me access to unpublished archaeological material concerning the Washington house at Pope's Creek, and he offered me accommodations at the park for a sustained and crucial period of courthouse research. The Northern Neck clerks of circuit court patiently permitted me to spend many days at work in their record rooms. Without the tolerance, guidance, and staff support of Bertha Abbott in Lancaster County, J. Steven Thomas in Northumberland County, Doris Moss in Westmoreland County and

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Ammon G. Dunton, Jr. of Lancaster County does not know that when he asked me to consider nominating his eighteenth-century house to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985, he also drew my attention to the architectural, archaeological, and historical wealth of Virginia's Northern Neck. It was on account of my research for the Verville Nomination and in response to Ammon and Kathy Dunton's cordial welcome to Lancaster County that I decided to settle my dissertation research on this most intriguing of Virginia's Tidewater peninsulas.

The Duntons were just the first of many Northern Neck residents who kindly permitted me to examine the eighteenth-century houses in their care. For the houses of Lancaster County, I am also indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Edward G. Gruis of Belle Isle; Mr. Christopher Kelley for access to Huntons; Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Voorhees of Merry Point; Dr. and Mrs. William A. Mitchell of Monaskon; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas L. Towles for access to Oakley; Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Faucher of Payne Shop. In Northumberland County, I owe thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Byrne of Roadview; Mr. John J. Cardwell for access to the Claughton house; Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Hudnall of Clifton; Mr. Russell H. Lewis, Mr. T. Ronnie Lewis, and Mrs. Fern B. Dawson for access to Mount Zion tenement. My Richmond County benefactors include Mrs. Evelyn D. Ward and Mrs. Evelyn W. Milsted of Bladensfield; Mr. and Mrs. Martin K. King of Grove Mount; Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Bonar of Indian Banks; Mr. Edgar Omohundro for access to Menokin; Mrs. Henry G. Tayloe of Mount Airy; Mr. and Mrs. Landon Carter Wellford of Sabine Hall; Mrs. George L. Pew and Mrs. Robert O. Y. Warren III of Woodford. For Westmoreland County, I am grateful to Mr. L. H. Wilson, Mrs. Margaret Minor, and Mrs. Rhoda Grebe for access to

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As I began to shift from fieldwork to documentary research, many librarians and archivists contributed to the quality of this study through their cordiality and expertise. I found crucial resources at the Swem Library of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, and the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C. Of great importance were the sources, services, and advice I received from Petie Bogen-Garrett, Bob Clay, Conley Edwards, Chris Kolbe, Carolyn Parsons, and Gwen Tayloe of the Virginia State Library and Archives in Richmond. Nelson Lankford, Frances Pollard, Joe Robertson, Janet Schwarz, and Lee Shepherd all made special occasions of my trips to the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond. Liz Ackert, Susan Berg, Cathy Grosfils, Mary Keeling, Dell Moore, and George Yetter always welcomed me to the Foundation Library at Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and all of them accepted with unfailing kindness my requests for information by phone while I was in Michigan. I also received important help with assembling illustrations from Sandy Belan of the Department of Communications at Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Jane Smith and Teresa Roane of the Valentine Museum in Richmond, Jeff Goldman of the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore, Conrad Wright of the Massachusetts

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## ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to discern what eighteenth-century houses--their forms, dimensions, internal organization, and external settings--have to contribute to scholarly understanding of colonial Virginia's society, economy, and culture.

Historic Virginia houses usually were built more recently than traditional scholars and popular writers have supposed, and standing eighteenth-century houses are, almost without exception, far larger and finer than the dwellings most colonial Virginians inhabited. Yet even lightly constructed and shabbily finished houses stood at the center of a complex of buildings where most of the planter's household and agricultural work was performed. Thus eighteenth-century Virginia houses were more mundane and unpretentious yet more symbolically and functionally dominant components of the landscape than surviving houses and their isolated rural sites can suggest.

This dissertation employs documentary, architectural, and archaeological evidence to address three questions. What can a close reading of written sources convey about the character and context of houses in eighteenth-century Virginia? What can a close inspection of surviving houses, their archaeological remains, and their associated documentary histories convey about the circumstances of their construction and use, the significance of their form and presentation? Finally, what was the economic background and the social significance of a pretentious Virginia house which was built, accoutred, and inhabited during a time and in a place where such structures were exceedingly rare?

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY HOUSING  
ON THE NORTHERN NECK OF VIRGINIA



## INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades, a new generation of historians and anthropologists has taken to the field for a fresh look at the buildings of early Virginia and Maryland and for a revised understanding of the colonial world that made them. These fieldworkers have been drawn to the task in part by their commitment to a new approach to the study of artifacts. Some components of this approach simply involve new ways of discovering or handling information. These include the application of statistical techniques to the names and numbers that appear in county court records and more systematic methods of archaeological excavation. Important as such techniques and methods undoubtedly are, the basic element of this new approach to the study of artifacts is the view that the recovery of an historical context--the intricacies of one time and place--is a task well worth scholarly undertaking. Of equal significance is the conviction that human behavior--past or present--may best be comprehended through the close analysis of its material remains. Central as well is a tough-minded awareness that much of the past is beyond recovery, and that every piece of historical information is a chance survivor in need of careful scrutiny and evaluation. No less important is a recognition that the most useful answer to any question about the past requires the patient sorting, comparing, and patching together of insights drawn from many different sources.

Years will pass before reevaluation of the Chesapeake's early architectural history is complete, but recent work has already

challenged established notions about the form, appearance, and significance of houses in colonial Virginia and Maryland. It is now clear that most extant colonial structures were built much more recently than traditional authorities supposed.<sup>1</sup> There are a number of reasons why earlier generations of scholars assigned incorrectly ancient dates for the buildings they studied, but dominant among them was an impulse to accept the "fund" of available early buildings as representative of the entire span of the colonial period. The fact is, however, that no more than a handful of seventeenth-century houses are left standing in the Chesapeake region, and only Bacon's Castle in Surry County survives from Virginia's first century of white settlement.<sup>2</sup> Recent fieldwork and documentary research has confirmed that the construction dates of most surviving colonial houses cluster within the last three quarters of the eighteenth century.

Bacon's Castle was not unique in seventeenth-century Virginia,

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Henry Chandlee Forman, The Architecture of the Old South: The Medieval Style, 1585-1850 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948) and Fiske Kimball, Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922).

<sup>2</sup> Newport Parish Church--now St. Luke's--in Isle of Wight County was built in 1685 and the tower of James City Church at Jamestown was built in 1699, but Bacon's Castle is the only surviving seventeenth-century house in Virginia. Stephenson B. Andrews, editor, Bacon's Castle, Surry County, Virginia (Richmond: Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, 1984); Dell Upton, Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia (New York and Cambridge: Architectural History Foundation and MIT Press, 1986), pp. 58 and 72. For a description of the technique used to confirm Bacon's Castle's 1665 date of construction, see Mark R. Edwards, "Dating Historic Buildings in Lower Southern Maryland with Dendrochronology," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture I, Camille Wells, editor (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), pp. 153-158.

but it certainly was extraordinary. Just how extraordinary is suggested by William Fitzhugh's 1686 description of a house on the Northern Neck of Virginia. It was, he said, a "shell of a house without chimneys or partition, & not one tittle of workmanship about it more than a tobacco house."<sup>3</sup> Virginia houses like this elementary "shell" were constructed on wooden posts or blocks set directly into the ground. Their riven or sawn cladding clung tenuously to rotting and shifting wooden frames, and even the chimneys were made of wood daubed with clay or plaster to make them more or less--and only temporarily--fireproof.<sup>4</sup>

Archaeology performed in Virginia and Maryland since 1970 has revealed that throughout the seventeenth century, almost everyone inhabited such short-lived dwellings, even well-to-do planters like Thomas Pope's tenants at the Clifts plantation in Westmoreland County.<sup>5</sup> Poorly equipped to outlast the first generation of

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Beale Davis, editor, William Fitzhugh and His Chesapeake World 1676-1701: The Fitzhugh Letters and Other Documents (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 203.

<sup>4</sup> Earthfast houses and their recent archaeological investigation are discussed in Cary Carson, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, and Dell Upton, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," Winterthur Portfolio 16 (Summer/Autumn 1981), pp. 135-196 and William M. Kelso, Kingsmill Plantations 1619-1800: Archaeology of Country Life in Colonial Virginia (Orlando, Florida: Academic Press, 1984).

<sup>5</sup> Fraser D. Neiman, "Domestic Architecture at the Clifts Plantation: The Social Context of Early Virginia Building," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 28 (December 1978), pp. 3096-3128; reprinted in Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, editors, Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), pp. 292-314; Fraser D. Neiman, The "Manner House" Before Stratford: Discovering the Clifts Plantation (Stratford Hall, Virginia: Robert E. Lee Memorial

occupation, such structures stood little chance of surviving long enough to sustain the scrutiny of twentieth-century historians.

Other established notions about colonial Chesapeake housing also require reevaluation. In 1939 one architectural historian expressed a commonly held view that "it is in the great country houses and the rural churches and court houses that [Virginia's] characteristic building expression is found."<sup>6</sup> To some extent, this statement reflects a traditional scholar's preoccupation with superlative buildings.<sup>7</sup> But it is also based on the assumption that standing early houses range themselves in a representative fashion not only across colonial history but also up and down the social scale. Actually, the "mansions of Virginia" were built by only the very richest planters and thus were decidedly uncharacteristic of colonial Virginia architecture, even during the eighteenth century.

Verville, an eighteenth-century house in Lancaster County, provides an instructive example (fig. 1). A story-and-a-half brick structure with a two-room plan, Verville is a substantial and finely detailed house, but because of its modest size, conventional architectural historians have not numbered it among Virginia's "great country houses."<sup>8</sup> Verville was built by James Gordon, a prominent Lancaster County merchant and planter, between 1742 and 1749.<sup>9</sup> When Gordon died in 1768, he left the house and its Association, 1980).

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Tileston Waterman, "English Antecedents of Virginia Architecture," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 80 (January 1939), p. 58.

<sup>7</sup> For more on this topic, see Chapter 5.

<sup>8</sup> Verville is not, for example, included among the houses discussed in Waterman's standard traditional text. Thomas Tileston Waterman, The Mansions of Virginia, 1706-1776 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1945).

<sup>9</sup> James Gordon was a Scots merchant who immigrated to the colony around 1740. "Journal of Colonel James Gordon, of Lancaster

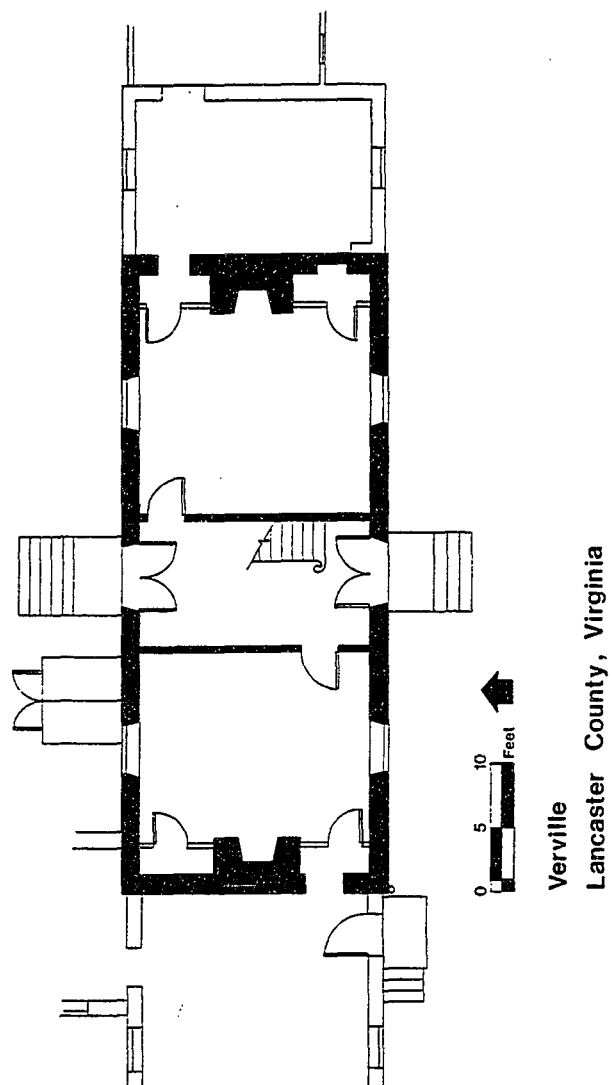


Fig. 1. Plan of Verville, Lancaster County, Virginia. (Drawing, Camille Wells.)

surrounding 460-acre plantation to his oldest son. He had an additional 1050 acres of Lancaster County land to distribute among his other children.<sup>10</sup> Using landholding as a measure of wealth, James Gordon and his Verville held an impressive rank in Lancaster County. Of the total 289 landholding planters in Lancaster County in 1773, only three owned fifteen hundred acres or more. This suggests that less than 2 percent of the county's landed population had the means to own or build a house of Verville's size or finish.<sup>11</sup>

County, Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly 1st Series, 11 (October 1902), p. 98. Gordon apparently constructed Verville between 1742, when he purchased two acres of land overlooking the Corotoman River, and 1749, when a deed recording his acquisition of an adjacent tract refers to "the hill the sd Gordon's dwelling house stands on." Thomas Carter to James Gordon, 10 November 1742, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 13, p. 312; John Carter to James Gordon, 12 May 1749, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 14, p. 243. That the dwelling mentioned in the 1749 deed is the surviving house is confirmed by the regular pattern of glazed headers in its Flemish-bond brickwork. This sort of variegated masonry became unfashionable after the middle of the eighteenth century. Calder Loth, "Notes on the Evolution of Virginia Brickwork from the Seventeenth Century to the Late Nineteenth Century," APT Bulletin 6 (1974), p. 94.

<sup>10</sup> Will of James Gordon, 18 February 1768, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 18, p. 105.

<sup>11</sup> It is important to emphasize that these 289 landowners were better off economically--and by implication, socially--than were most of Lancaster County's inhabitants. Beneath them in wealth and standing were the landless majority: tenants, craftsmen, overseers, indentured servants, free and enslaved blacks, as well as most women and children. Even among this advantaged landowning component of the population, small planters far outnumbered those whose extensive tracts could support real gentility and luxury. Almost 73 percent of the county's landowners made their living on two hundred acres or less. These figures are drawn from Robert E. Brown and B. Katherine Brown, Virginia 1705-

One final misconception deserves attention. Until recently most architectural scholars gave little critical thought to the presently remote, isolated settings characteristic of most extant early houses. Because Virginia and Maryland were overwhelmingly rural colonies, these lonely sites have seemed appropriate. But the documentary record indicates the error of such a neglectful assumption. Most standing colonial houses were the domestic seats of extensive agricultural operations and were surrounded originally by service buildings of every description. In 1783 a German traveler observed that

A plantation in Virginia, and also in the lower parts of Maryland, has often the appearance of a small village, by reason of the many small buildings, which taken all together would at times hardly go to make a single roomy and commodious house. Here are living-rooms, bed-chambers, guest-chambers, store-rooms, kitchens, quarters for the slaves, and who knows what else.<sup>12</sup>

In some fortunate cases, there are specific details with which to fortify the general impression created by this foreigner's account. For most of this century, Lancaster County's Belle Isle has stood on its broad level site in imposing solitude, framed only by two one-story brick dependencies.<sup>13</sup> Thomas B. Griffin built the original two-story section of the house and its detached flankers, probably at about the time he became clerk of Lancaster County Court.<sup>14</sup>

1786: Democracy or Aristocracy? (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964), p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> Johann David Schoepf, Travels in the Confederation 1783-1784 (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1911), v. 2, pp. 32-33.

<sup>13</sup> An early twentieth-century photograph of Belle Isle and its two surviving dependencies appears in Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, p. 381.

<sup>14</sup> Griffin was confirmed in the position of Lancaster County

Griffin's brother described Belle Isle as "new" when he advertised it for sale in 1778.<sup>15</sup> Rawleigh W. Downman added the two one-story wings to the house between 1786, when he purchased the plantation, and 1818, the year he insured his investment against fire.<sup>16</sup> It is in this insurance policy that more information about the early context of Belle Isle is preserved. Besides the main house, which the appraisers considered worth \$10,000, the document records the function, dimensions, construction material, and approximate position of ten nearby outbuildings (fig. 2). According to this policy, the two surviving brick dependencies were used as a kitchen and a schoolhouse in 1818. Four other one-story brick structures--a smokehouse, a dairy, a laundry, and a shoemaker's shop--dotted the site. The insured wooden buildings included a spinning house, a nurse's house, a granary, and a stable. The existence of a "small wood corn house" was also noted, although this structure was left unprotected by the policy.<sup>17</sup>

This reference to a corn house is significant, for it reveals that the Belle Isle complex involved more buildings than Downman thought worth insuring. While the real number of structures cannot be determined, but there must have been several more to house the numerous slaves Downman needed to keep his array of service clerk in 1771. Benjamin J. Hillman, editor, Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1966), v. 6, p. 405.

<sup>15</sup> Corbin Griffin inherited Belle Isle at his brother's death. Will of Thomas Bertrand Griffin, 21 May 1778, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 20, ff. 129-130. Griffin advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie), 10 July 1778, p. 2, c. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Nathaniel Burwell to Rawleigh William Downman, 27 February 1786, Lancaster County Deed Book 21, ff. 61-62.

<sup>17</sup> Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia Policy No. 574, 19 February 1818, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.



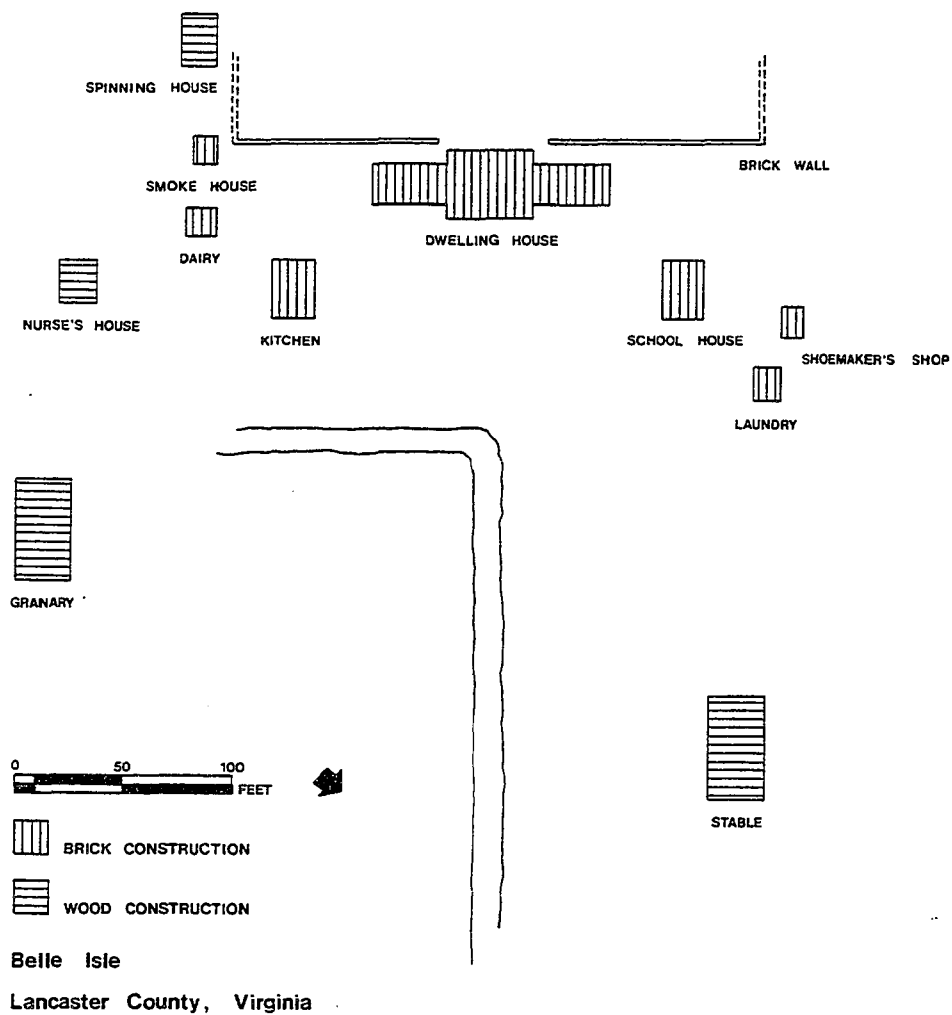


Fig. 2. Site Plan of Belle Isle, Lancaster County, Virginia.  
Interpreted from Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia Policy No.  
574, 19 February 1818. (Drawing, Camille Wells.)

buildings in good repair and humming with activity.<sup>18</sup> The mansion house, then, was originally one of perhaps fifteen structures distributed about this site overlooking the Rappahannock River. Although the elaborately embellished two-story brick house was indeed the largest and most substantial structure in the group, it was still only one component of an assemblage, and it was dependent on the lesser structures for its presentation of gentility and prosperity. These small, plain, single-story buildings did more than shelter the activities that made life in the mansion house possible and even pleasant. Because their forms and sizes were characteristic of eighteenth-century Virginia's architectural traditions, they visually connected the extraordinary mansion at Belle Isle to its surrounding colonial landscape.

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If there is a single point to all this dismantling of established notions about the domestic architecture of the colonial Chesapeake, it is the disappointing conclusion that the few remaining eighteenth-century houses are not very reliable representatives of the vast quantity that have vanished. Yet these exceptional houses standing bereft of their original plantation contexts not only have shaped scholarly conclusions about the architectural character of colonial Virginia but have dominated the way scholarly questions are framed and phrased as well.

This is the place where my dissertation begins. It is principally an attempt to compensate for the gaps and skewness in available evidence about the domestic architecture of colonial Virginia and it is consequently suffused with my efforts to learn more things--or different things--from sources with which scholars of Virginia

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<sup>18</sup> When Downman died in 1839, his appraisers counted sixty-three slaves at Belle Isle. Inventory of Rawleigh William Downman Estate, Lancaster County Estate Book 35, pp. 381-398.

history and architecture have long been familiar. One key aspect of my method has been to approach each document or building with no assumption about the evidence it embodies other than that conventional readings are probably inaccurate. Crucial as well is my custom of juxtaposing two or more fragments of information concerning the same structure or circumstance on the chance that they may together reveal more than the sum of their parts. A third component of my approach involves applying the techniques of quantitative analysis to sources that may, when accumulated and measured, shed a different sort of light on matters architectural. Finally, my work herein involves drawing conclusions from what appears to be missing from architectural or documentary sources. This "reading between the lines" of written evidence--especially evidence that seems puzzling or incomplete to modern eyes--often provides clues to those aspects of a topic that eighteenth-century writers and readers took for granted. At architectural sites, the assumption of missing or concealed information is based on my experience that houses are changed in a significant way at the rate of once for every generation of inhabitants.

This dissertation addresses two questions. The first is: what can a close reading of written sources tell us about the character and context of most houses in eighteenth-century Virginia? The second is: what can a close inspection of surviving houses and their associated documents tell us about the circumstances of their construction and use, the significance of their organization and presentation? I have also used pieces of my answers to these two questions to address yet a third: what was the economic background and the social meaning of a well-built, a finely detailed, or a spacious house during a time and in a place where such structures were rare?

In terms of sources employed to answer these questions, this

dissertation has two foundations. The first is a set of transcriptions I made between 1987 and 1989 of every advertisement of property for sale in the Virginia Gazette. Published more or less continuously from 1736 until 1780, the Gazette was colonial Virginia's only newspaper.<sup>19</sup> As a rule, almost half of each issue was taken up by Virginia planters's announcements of all sorts, and these include 838 detailed descriptions of land for sale. Because many announcements mention more than one parcel of land, they represent a total of 1019 distinct Virginia sites--722 plantations and 297 town lots.<sup>20</sup> Containing

<sup>19</sup> During its forty-four years of publication, the Virginia Gazette had several different printers, and beginning in 1766, there were two and sometimes three rival versions of the newspaper concurrently in circulation. Most of each issue was constructed from stories, letters, and other periodicals brought to Williamsburg by travelers from neighboring colonies. There are important exceptions, but most information of a local or regional nature was contained in advertisements for which Gazette printers encouraged their readers to hire space. Lester J. Cappon and Stella F. Duff, editors, Virginia Gazette Index 1736-1780 (Williamsburg: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1950), v. 1, pp. v-ix; Paul P. Hoffman, editor, Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Virginia Gazette Daybooks 1750-1752 and 1764-1766 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Library Microfilm Publications, 1967), pp. 5-10.

<sup>20</sup> I transcribed every advertisement of land offered for sale, lease, or rent in the Virginia Gazette, assigning it the date and printer of its first surviving appearance. Planters sometimes paid for their advertisements to appear in more than one version of the newspaper and for several weeks--occasionally, even months--in succession. I recorded these subsequent or duplicate appearances, but counted each advertisement and each parcel of land only once. The set of 838 advertisements excludes notices for land in neighboring colonies as well as announcements that contain absolutely no descriptive material concerning buildings, improvements, or features of the property.

as they do descriptions of improvements made and buildings constructed on each parcel of land, these Gazette advertisements represent an opportunity to develop new and better supported conclusions about the appearance and the substance of colonial Virginia dwelling sites.

The second foundation for this dissertation is a set of architectural and documentary records pertaining to a group of geographically related eighteenth-century Virginia houses. Between 1986 and 1990 I examined and recorded thirty-two eighteenth-century houses that survive in Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties.<sup>21</sup> Extensive written and visual records of seven demolished houses in these four counties permitted me to increase the quantity of study houses to thirty-nine. Completing the set of forty-three study houses are four vanished houses brought to light by recent and systematic archaeological excavations (table 1).

I selected the four eastern counties of Virginia's Northern Neck as the region for my study of eighteenth-century houses in part because of its architectural diversity. Only two one-room colonial houses are left standing and largely unaltered in Virginia, and one of these--the Rochester house--is located on the Northern Neck. At the other end of the architectural continuum are several of the great Tidewater mansions, including Stratford, the largest surviving

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<sup>21</sup> This collection of thirty-two houses represents the results of a very systematic investigation of all but three houses in each of the four counties that appeared to have--or was said to have--an eighteenth-century component. In the three cases, owners denied me the access necessary to distinguish an eighteenth-century from an early nineteenth-century date of construction. The sort of investigative architectural fieldwork I practice is slow, detailed, and potentially invasive. Not every house owner finds it convenient or even possible to permit such study of their architectural property.

Table 1: Northern Neck Study Houses

<u>NAME</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>STATUS</u>
Belle Isle	Lancaster	standing
Belmont	Lancaster	demolished
Bladensfield	Richmond	standing
Blenheim	Westmoreland	standing
Chantilly	Westmoreland	excavated
Claughton house	Northumberland	standing
Clifton	Northumberland	standing
Cople Glebe house	Westmoreland	standing
Cox house	Northumberland	demolished
Currioman	Westmoreland	standing/partly
Ditchley	Northumberland	standing
Edgehill	Richmond	demolished
Elba	Westmoreland	standing
Grove Mount	Richmond	standing
Hague	Westmoreland	standing
Hunttons	Lancaster	standing/altered
Hurstville	Northumberland	standing
Indian Banks	Richmond	standing
Kirnan	Westmoreland	standing
Linden Farm	Richmond	standing
Menokin	Richmond	standing/in ruins
Millenbeck	Lancaster	excavated
Merry Point	Lancaster	demolished
Monaskon	Lancaster	standing
Monroe house	Westmoreland	excavated
Morattico	Lancaster	demolished
Mount Airy	Richmond	standing
Mount Zion	Northumberland	standing
Oakley	Lancaster	standing/partly
Paynes Shop	Lancaster	standing
Peckatone	Westmoreland	demolished
Popes Creek	Westmoreland	excavated
Roadview	Northumberland	standing
Rochester house	Westmoreland	standing
Sabine Hall	Richmond	standing
Shearman's Ferry	Lancaster	standing/partly
Stratford	Westmoreland	standing
Towles Point	Lancaster	demolished
Twiford	Westmoreland	standing
Verville	Lancaster	standing
Walnut Hill	Westmoreland	standing
Wilton	Westmoreland	standing
Woodford	Richmond	standing

eighteenth-century house in all of Virginia.<sup>22</sup> Between these extremes are forty-one other dwellings that represent much of the known range of variation in eighteenth-century house forms and details. I also chose the Northern Neck as the region for my study of eighteenth-century houses because there the colonial records survive for four contiguous counties. Thus it was possible for me to develop a complete chain of title for each of the forty-three houses. These histories of property ownership have been augmented by material contained in probate inventories, birth and marriage records, survey books, and court orders, all of which are comparatively plentiful in Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties (fig. 3).

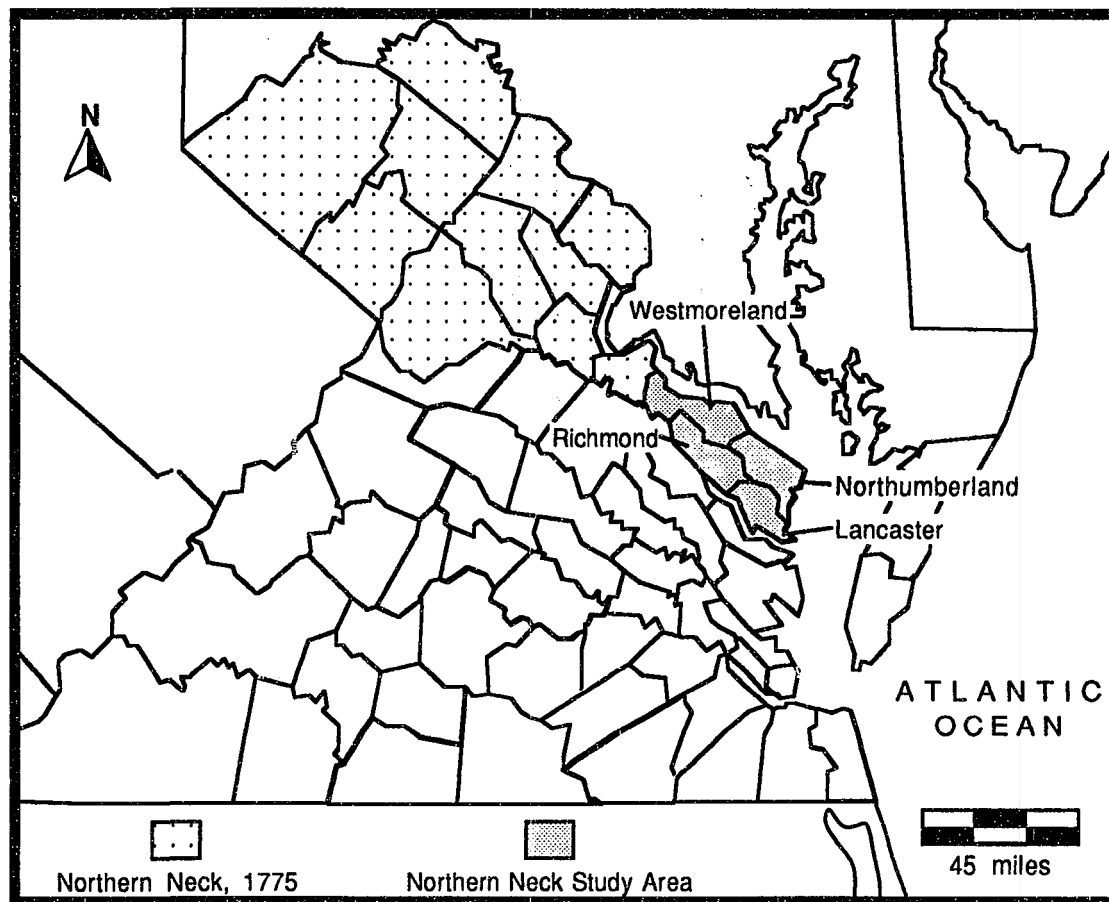
The structure of this dissertation is largely the result of my preoccupation with historical evidence--architectural and documentary--and its uses. Chapter 1 is a brief examination of the political and institutional history of the Northern Neck. Its dominant themes concern how the peninsula's distance from the center of colonial authority and its peculiar status as the domain of English proprietors affected the outlook of its inhabitants and the organization of its countryside.

In Chapter 2, passages drawn from colonial diaries, letters, travel accounts, and plantation records form the basis for a detailed depiction of the colonial landscape on Virginia's Northern Neck. My goal in this essay was to discover how much a comprehensive collection and juxtaposition of anecdotal sources might contribute to a revised understanding of housing characteristics and contexts in early Virginia. I also experimented with the minutes of Anglican parish vestry meetings as a source for discovering, through their references to parish glebes, typical sequences in the acquisition,

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<sup>22</sup> See the entries for the Rochester house and Stratford in the catalog.

FIG. 3. MAP OF COLONIAL VIRGINIA SHOWING STUDY AREA





improvement, and repair of colonial plantations.<sup>23</sup>

Chapter 3 represents the results of my analysis of the eighteenth-century Virginia Gazette advertisements. Counted and ranked newspaper references to and descriptions of houses give statistical grounding to statements about the sizes, forms, and structures of most houses in eighteenth-century Virginia. Quantitative analysis of notations concerning outbuildings help to determine how and to what extent Virginia houses of the Virginia countryside were augmented with service and agricultural buildings. Similarly, references in the newspaper advertisements to plantation characteristics and improvements permit a clearer perception of the way Virginia houses functioned as components of the rural landscape. Chapter 3 also considers the composition of the Gazette advertisements as evidence for Virginia planters's perceptions of their houses, their outbuildings, and their Tidewater plantations.<sup>24</sup>

Chapter 4 considers the forty-three study houses as a cohesive set of buildings connected by their location on the Northern Neck of Virginia, by their dates of construction during the last three quarters of the eighteenth century, and by their standing as the dwellings of well-to-do Virginia planters. Field analysis permits a ranking of these houses according to size, and documentary research makes it possible to sort them according to different measures of eighteenth-century wealth and social standing. These operations reveal that although wealth was certainly fundamental to the successful completion of an expensive house-building campaign,

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<sup>23</sup> Much of the material in Chapter 2 was published as "The Eighteenth-Century Landscape of Virginia's Northern Neck," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 37 (December 1987), pp. 4217-4255.

<sup>24</sup> Chapter 3 was published as "The Planter's Prospect: Houses, Outbuildings, and Rural Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Winterthur Portfolio 28 (Spring 1993), pp. 1-31.

affluent planters did not necessarily feel compelled to manifest their resources in this architectural fashion. Moreover, there was no inevitable relationship between a planter's impulse to build an expensive house and his interest in the acquisition and display of luxurious household goods.

Chapter 5 lays out in greater detail the scholarly background and context of this and other recent studies of housing, landscapes, and material culture in colonial Virginia.

All of the forty-three Northern Neck study houses figure in Chapter 4, and all of them serve as examples in one or another context throughout this dissertation. The catalog that concludes this study, however, covers only those fifteen houses built in Westmoreland County. Each essay contains my architectural analysis of one house--how it was built, used, and altered--as well as my summary of the site's history. Together these essays demonstrate my detailed approach to fieldwork and to documentary research. They also stand in this study for similar architectural and historical accounts of the remaining twenty-eight study houses in Lancaster, Northumberland, and Richmond Counties. Their most important role is as representations of my view that historic architecture best serves scholarly questions about the human past when it is investigated and understood one building at a time.

## CHAPTER 1: HISTORY OF THE NORTHERN NECK

When Captain John Smith and his fellow travelers "fel with the river of Patawomeck" on June 16, 1608, they were, as they thought themselves to be, the first Englishmen to investigate this major tributary of the Chesapeake Bay and to land on its shores. The explorers knew that the region was inhabited and they expected to cross the paths of natives as they journeyed up the Potomac. Indeed, they were casting about for them that June day, eager as they were "to know the name of this 9 mile broad river" and they surely hoped to learn something about the character of the countryside beyond the sandy shorelines as well. Thirty miles northwest of the river's mouth, they met two "salvages" who led them into "a little bayed creek toward Onawmament," apparently Nomini Bay in Westmoreland County. There they were ambushed by a party of Matchotic Indians.<sup>1</sup> The Englishmen responded with gunfire and the natives abruptly altered their approach, greeted the travelers in a civil fashion, and took some of them inland to visit "their kings habitation."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Machodoc" later became the name of Thomas Lee's plantation which was located on the east side of Nomini River in Westmoreland County. "Machodoc" remains today the name of a Westmoreland County crossroads community. See the entry for Stratford in the catalog.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Arber and A. G. Bradley, editors, Travels and Works of Captain John Smith, 1580-1631 (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1910), pp. 52, 112, 348, and 417. There is some evidence that Smith and his companions were not the first Englishmen to land on the Tidewater peninsula that came to be known as the Northern Neck of Virginia. In

Smith and his men subsequently learned that the werowance of the Matchotics, one of Powhatan's confederates, had been commanded by the great Indian chief to kill the Englishmen. But the Matchotics regarded themselves as only marginally under the control of Powhatan, whose center of authority lay some distance to the south. Thus they chose to treat their visitors in a cordial manner.

In this independence of action, the Indians demonstrated their sense of themselves as living in a region both defined and isolated by the rivers Potomac and Rappahannock. This point of view also came to prevail among those English immigrants and their descendants who eventually settled on this Tidewater peninsula. While in its broad outlines the early history of the Northern Neck is consistent with the larger story of colonial Virginia, the particulars of the Northern Neck story are distinct, and one key to the character of the region is the inhabitants's longstanding sense of detachment from and diffidence toward the concerns and imperatives of their Tidewater neighbors.

During their visit to the werowance village of the Matchotic, Smith and his company surely absorbed some of the details if not the general contours of the Northern Neck's human geography. In 1608 the area now encompassed by Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, Westmoreland, King George, and Stafford Counties was populated by several thousand Algonquian-speaking Indians who had sorted themselves into nine zones or districts, each of which was ruled by a chief or werowance (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> These Indians, who sustained

1604 an English seaman, perhaps Bartholomew Gilbert or Christopher Newport, sailed up the Rappahannock River and landed on its northern shore near what is now Little Carter Creek in Richmond County. There they killed a Rappahannock werowance and made captives of several of his tribesmen. See Stephen R. Potter, "An Ethnohistorical Examination of Indian Groups in Northumberland County, Virginia, 1608-1719," (M. A. Thesis: University of North Carolina, 1976), p. 10.

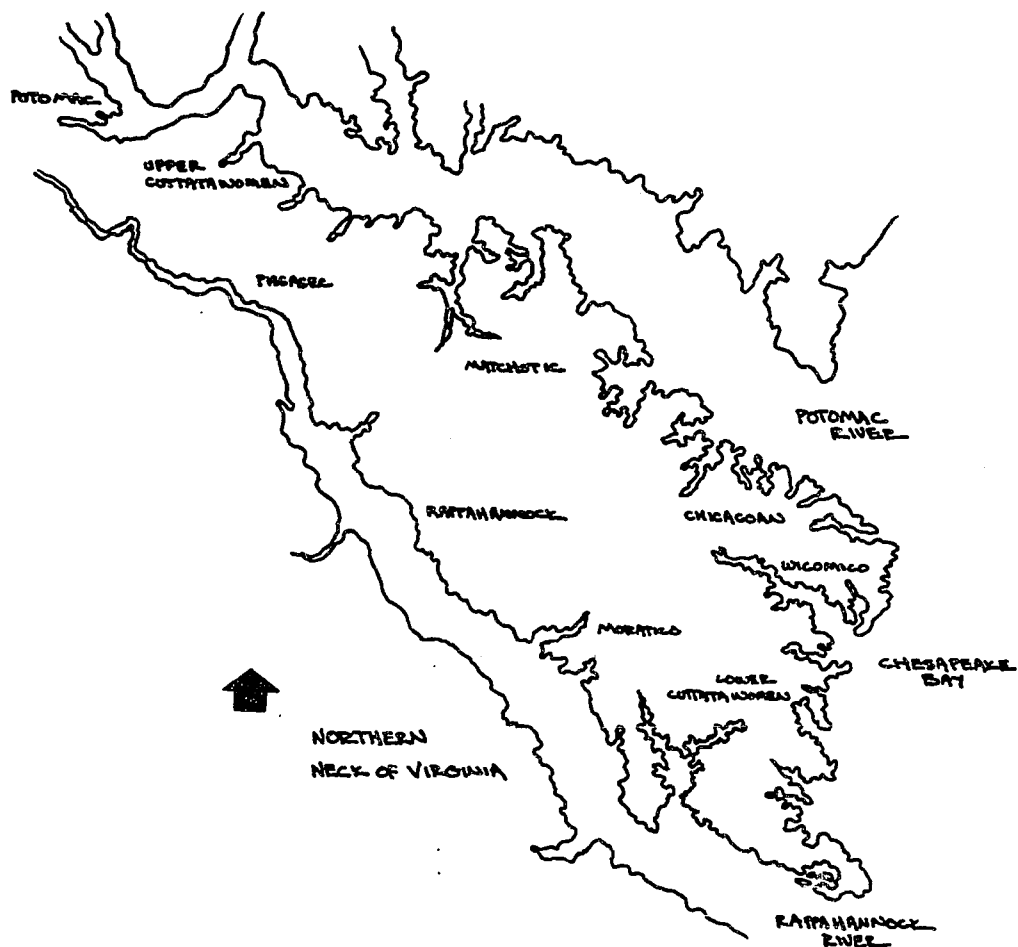


Fig. 1. Map of the Northern Neck Showing Indian Communities. Interpreted from Stephen R. Potter, "An Analysis of Chicacoan Settlement Patterns," (Ph. D. Dissertation: University of North Carolina, 1982), p. 31. (Drawing, Camille Wells.)

themselves as fishermen and farmers, had organized the entire Northern Neck peninsula into a loose patchwork of fields and woodlands surrounding dispersed permanent villages and smaller hamlets as well as a quantity of seasonal hunting and fishing camps. Their settlements and their numbers diminished once the English took an acquisitive interest in the peninsula, but the Indians held their ground long enough to leave Algonquian names for many of the Northern Neck's landscape features and localities.<sup>4</sup>

Sustained Indian-European contact on the Northern Neck began through trade. As early as 1610, Captain Samuel Argall sailed up the Potomac River in search of corn to feed starving Jamestown settlers. Indeed, corn from Northern Neck Algonquians helped to sustain English settlers along the James River for over a decade.<sup>5</sup> From 1627 until at least 1657, Henry Fleet traded with the Indians of the Northern Neck for beaver skins. Nathaniel Pope of Westmoreland County established a post for trading with the Nansatico Indians of King George County in 1656.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The nine districts were known as Wicomico, Lower Cuttatawomen, Chicacoan, Morattico, Rappahannock, Matchotic, Pissasec, Upper Cuttatawoman, and Potomac. Stephen R. Potter, "An Analysis of Chicacoan Settlement Patterns," (Ph. D. Dissertation: University of North Carolina, 1982), p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Six of the Northern Neck study houses--Millenbeck, Monaskon, and Morattico in Lancaster County, Menokin in Richmond County, Currioman and Peckatone in Westmoreland County--are known by Indian place names. At least three other eighteenth-century houses with Indian names--Robert Carter's Corotoman in Lancaster County, Robert Carter's Nomini Hall and Thomas Lee's Machodoc in Westmoreland County--have vanished.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Spelman, Relation of Virginia (London: 1609; reprint: London: Chiswick Press, 1872), p. 17; Fairfax Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William: A Study of Origins in Northern Virginia (Richmond: 1924; reprint: Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1987), p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Fleet, "A Brief Journal," Northern Neck of Virginia

English settlement of the Northern Neck began in 1640, when John Mottram established Chicacoan on a site in Northumberland County north of the present town of Heathsville. At the time, it was unclear to what larger political entity the peninsula would belong. As late as 1646, the York River still had some currency as the northern boundary of Virginia, and most of the early settlers of Chicacoan had come from Maryland. But in the same year, the Virginia assembly asserted that "the inhabitants of Chicawane, alias Northumberland [are] members of this colony," and taxed them accordingly.<sup>7</sup> Two years later, the colonial government decreed that the land between the Rappahannock and Potomac rivers "be hereafter called and knowne by the name of the county of Northumberland," and authorized the election of burgesses, the patenting of land, and the levying of taxes in the new polity.<sup>8</sup> After that, Northern Neck settlement and land claims increased

Historical Magazine 6 (December 1956), pp. 479-489; David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), pp. 44 and 60.

<sup>7</sup> In a treaty with the Virginia Algonquian Indians dated 5 October 1646, Virginians agreed to limit their settlements, with some exceptions, to the area east of the fall line between the James and York rivers. Clearly the colonial government had more expansive plans, though, because the act for taxation of Northumberland residents was approved later that same assembly session. Significantly, the taxes were required to pay the expenses of 1644 uprising of the Powhatans under their headman Opechancanough. William Waller Hening, editor, The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia . . . (Richmond: 1819-1823; reprint: Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press for the Jamestown Foundation of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1969), v. 1, pp. 323-326, 337-338. Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William, p. 38. There is a tenacious oral tradition that Mottram's settlement was augmented by Protestant refugees from Kent Island, which was claimed by the Calverts for Maryland in 1638.

<sup>8</sup> Hening, Statutes, v. 1, pp. 352-353.

rapidly--indeed, more rapidly than in any other part of Virginia. Colonists quickly found it necessary and convenient to subdivide Northumberland County. Lancaster County was created in 1651, Westmoreland County followed in 1653, and Rappahannock--later Richmond--County was established in 1656 (fig. 2). Between 1653 and 1674, Northern Neck inhabitants increased in number from thirteen hundred to six thousand--or from 9 to 19 percent of the colony's total population.<sup>9</sup>

English invasion of the Northern Neck ended the ancient tenure of the Indians. Some settlers secured their patents through bargains struck with their Indian neighbors. In 1657, Isaac Allerton persuaded the Matchotic werowance Peckatone to permit him to settle on land west of Jackson Creek in Westmoreland County, promising that he would make no further demands for land and would keep his cattle and hogs off cultivated Indian fields.<sup>10</sup> Most settlers, however, merely pushed the natives aside, and soon it was the Indians rather than the English who were forced to negotiate for space. In 1656 Westmoreland County authorities surveyed the remaining land of the Matchotics between Jackson and Bonum creeks and reserved it for the Indians's use.<sup>11</sup> In 1661 the Virginia

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<sup>9</sup> Not all of this growth took place on the Northern Neck. For a period of time in the seventeenth century, both Lancaster and Rappahannock Counties encompassed land on both shores of the Rappahannock River. Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), pp. 244-245 and 412.

<sup>10</sup> Cited in Potter, "Ethnohistorical Examination," p. 73. Allerton's land was near the present site of Wilton. See the entry for Wilton in the catalog.

<sup>11</sup> Cited in Potter, "Ethnohistorical Examination," p. 72. This land between Jackson and Bonum creeks was later the site of Gawin Corbin's plantation called "Peckatone." See the entry for Peckatone in the catalog.



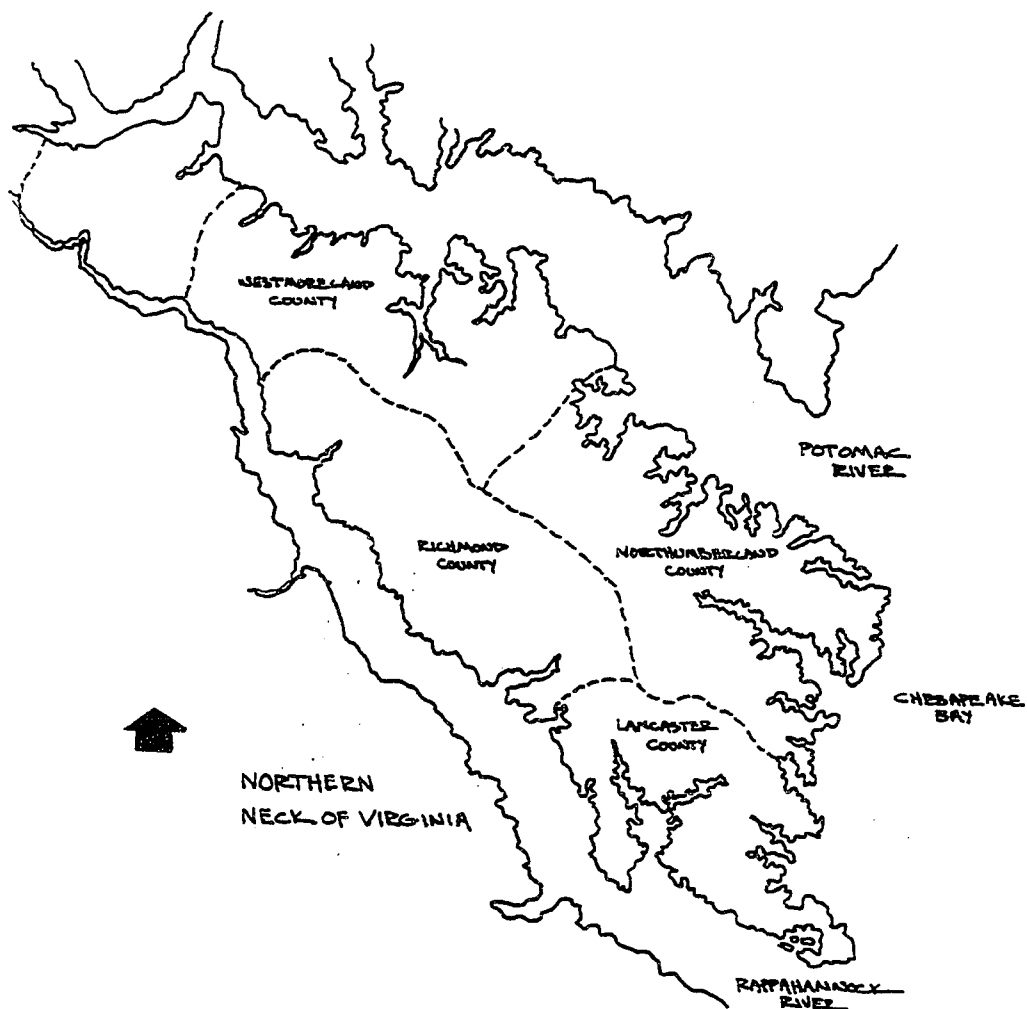


Fig. 2. Map of the Northern Neck of Virginia Showing County Boundaries. (Drawing, Camille Wells.)

legislature enacted a law permitting the Rappahannocks the right to fish, gather oysters, and collect other wild foods along the Rappahanock River shoreline "for the better releife of the poore Indians whome the seating of the English hath forced from their wonted conveniences."<sup>12</sup>

Indians retaliated sporadically for white encroachments. The Northern Neck militia marched against the Rappahannock Indians in 1654 on account of "certain injuries and isolencyes offered and done."<sup>13</sup> In 1666 the Westmoreland County militia launched an attack against the Potomacs in response to several unspecified murders, and with unspecified results. Most acts of violence occurred between individual English settlers and Indians in the course of private disputes.<sup>14</sup> The Indians of the Northern Neck probably made no more organized attempts to drive away white newcomers because they, like their counterparts throughout the

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<sup>12</sup> Hening, Statues, v. 2, p. 140, quoted in Gregory A. Waselkov, "Beginnings," in Walter Biscoe Norris, Jr., editor, Westmoreland County, Virginia 1653-1983 (Montross, Virginia: Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors, 1983), p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> Hening, Statues, v. 1, pp. 389-390.

<sup>14</sup> The Westmoreland County campaign of 1666 and numerous other seventeenth-century instances of violence between Indians and English are described in Waselkov, "Beginnings," pp. 20-23. The most significant incident occurred in 1675, and began when several Doeg Indians attacked the household of a Stafford County planter who, they claimed, had not paid them for some skins. In the course of their pursuit of the Doegs, the Stafford County militia killed a number of Susquenannocks, members of a friendly northern Chesapeake tribe. When the Susquehannocks retaliated, they initiated a season of Indian violence on white settlements that generated a crisis for the colony's government and culminated in Bacon's Rebellion. Warren M. Billings, John E. Selby, and Thad W. Tate, Colonial Virginia: A History (White Plains, New York: KTO Press, 1986), pp. 82-96.

Americas, found themselves visited by puzzling and devastating illnesses of European origin. Indeed, it was probably disease rather than warfare or displacement that caused the Northern Neck Indians to dwindle so severely.<sup>15</sup> The population of the Rappahannocks, for example, declined from 520 in the first decade of the seventeenth century to 234 in 1669. By that time, the Machotics, who were thought to number 425 when John Smith came calling in 1608, had entirely disappeared.<sup>16</sup>

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In 1649, just after English settlement of the Northern Neck had received official sanction through the formation of Northumberland County, the exiled King Charles II made a gift of the entire Northern Neck to seven of his loyal followers.<sup>17</sup> Charles identified the territory involved as that "bounded by and within the heads" of the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers. This language caused numerous subsequent controversies over precisely how far inland the sources of the two rivers lay, but that the grant included the Tidewater

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<sup>15</sup> See Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1972).

<sup>16</sup> Population figures for the early seventeenth century are drawn from E. Randolph Turner, "A Re-Examination of Powhatan Territorial Boundaries and Population, Ca. A. D. 1607," Quarterly Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Virginia 37 (1982), pp. 45-64. The figures in 1669 are drawn from Hening, Statutes, v. 2, pp. 274-275.

<sup>17</sup> The seven proprietors, whose patent was dated 18 September 1649, were John Lord Culpeper, Baron of Thoresway; Ralph Lord Hopton, Baron of Stratton; Henry Lord Jermyn, Baron St. Edmundsbury; Sir John Berkeley; Sir William Morton; Sir Dudley Wyatt; Thomas Culpeper. Douglas Southall Freeman, George Washington: A Biography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), v. 1, pp. 447-449. Freeman's book contains by far the most detailed history of the Northern Neck proprietary.

peninsula of the Northern Neck was never in doubt.<sup>18</sup> Within this domain, the proprietors originally were free to behave like sovereigns. Most notably, they could sell or lease land, impose and collect rents or taxes, and keep all the resulting sums for themselves. Of course, as long as Charles languished in exile, this generosity remained an abstraction, so Virginians briskly patented Northern Neck freeholds during the 1650s with no concern for--and possibly no knowledge of--the royal gift.<sup>19</sup>

The proprietorship and its implications were not evident until 1663, when a group of Bristol businessmen attempted to act on a lease for the Northern Neck that they had obtained from the seven proprietors. The alarmed Virginia assembly moved to raise money--some £2400--to buy out the proprietors, while Governor Berkeley and the Virginia Council sent to London a representative whose task it was to obtain a revocation of the proprietors's grant. He failed in this goal, but succeeded by 1669 in securing a modification of terms. Revisions to the grant included a termination of the proprietorship in 1690, stipulations that proprietary rights were subordinate to the authority of the colonial government, and protection of land grants made to Virginia colonists before 1661. Despite these amendments, expansion of Northern Neck landholding and settlement, which had virtually halted in 1663, resumed in only the most tentative fashion.<sup>20</sup>

In 1674 King Charles II promised Thomas Lord Culpeper, one of

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<sup>18</sup> Freeman, George Washington, v. 1, pp. 450 and 489.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Beale Davis, editor, William Fitzhugh and His Chesapeake World 1676-1701: The Fitzhugh Letters and Other Documents (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), pp. 39-40; Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom, pp. 244-245; Billings, Selby, and Tate, Colonial Virginia, pp. 50-52.

<sup>20</sup> Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom, pp. 244-245; Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William, pp. 667-678; Davis, William Fitzhugh, p. 40.

the Northern Neck proprietors, that he could assume the governorship of Virginia on the death of the aging William Berkeley.<sup>21</sup> As a result of this appointment, the circumstances of the Northern Neck and the affairs of its landholders gradually gained a more solid footing. Like most governors of colonial Virginia, Culpeper designated a deputy to live in the colony and administer the office, but he himself traveled to Virginia in 1680 with instructions from the king to establish better control over the unruly colonial leadership.<sup>22</sup> If Culpeper actually laid eyes on the Northern Neck during his stay, it was no more than a glimpse from a distance, but he apparently saw quite clearly the potential benefits of the vast grant of Virginia land that he and his partners had theretofore taken rather lightly. He also saw that the Northern Neck was "so small a part of the colony" that its status as private property might be successfully defended and maintained despite the opposition of the colonial legislature.<sup>23</sup> Upon returning to England, Culpeper bought out the other proprietors and secured from the king yet another revised grant to the Northern Neck--one that extended his rights of ownership into perpetuity.<sup>24</sup> When Culpeper died in 1689, he left the Northern Neck to his wife Margaret, Lady Culpeper and his

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas, Lord Culpeper was the heir of the original proprietor John, Lord Culpeper. He is often confused with his untitled cousin and another of the original proprietors, Thomas Culpeper.

<sup>22</sup> Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom, pp. 244-245; Davis, William Fitzhugh, p. 40

<sup>23</sup> Robert Beverley, The History and Present State of Virginia, Louis B. Wright, editor (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), p. 92.

<sup>24</sup> During his stay in Virginia, Culpeper sailed to Baltimore to confer with the Maryland proprietor. Douglas Southall Freeman speculates that he may have seen the Northern Neck during his voyage up the Chesapeake Bay. Freeman, George Washington, p. 476.

daughter Catherine, Lady Fairfax. The two women carefully reconfirmed their proprietorship under the new sovereigns William and Mary. Upon the deaths of the Ladies Culpeper and Fairfax in 1710 and 1719, the entire Culpeper estate descended to Catherine Fairfax's only son Thomas, who became the sixth Lord Fairfax. The Northern Neck proprietorship remained in his hands until his death in 1781.<sup>25</sup>

The Northern Neck grant only made economic sense to proprietors if they could profit both from the sale or lease of land and from the annual collection of quitrents. The realization of these benefits was a long time coming. The proprietors's first attempt to open a land office for the issue of patents and the registration of landholders dates from 1670, the year after their grant was modified but reconfirmed. In that year, they also initiated the custom of appointing a Virginian--usually a resident of the Northern Neck--to serve as agent for their interests, but neither this nor any of their other tactics yielded the desired results (table 1). When he succeeded William Berkeley as governor of Virginia in 1677, Lord Culpeper worked hard to secure Northern Neck acquiescence to the proprietorship, but his land office was no better recognized. His wife and daughter pressed their interests even more vigorously. As a result, the Northern Neck land books at last were begun in 1690.<sup>26</sup>

In 1693 Margaret Culpeper and Catherine Fairfax appointed George Brent and William Fitzhugh as their agents on the Northern Neck. Brent and Fitzhugh established the custom among Northern Neck proprietary agents of using the office to secure enormous

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<sup>25</sup> "King and Queen County Deeds," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 9 (January 1902), p. 309; Davis, editor, William Fitzhugh, p. 40; Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William, pp. 145-146, 190, and 231.

<sup>26</sup> Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William, pp. 677-679.

TABLE 1: AGENTS FOR THE NORTHERN NECK PROPRIETARY

<u>YEARS IN OFFICE</u>	<u>NAME</u>
1670-1673	Thomas Kirton
1673-1677	William Aretkin
1677-1679	Daniel Parke
1679-1689	Nicholas Spencer
1690-1693	Philip Ludwell
1693-1699	George Brent/William Fitzhugh
1699-1700	William Fitzhugh
1702-1712	Robert Carter
1713-1719	Edmund Jennings and Thomas Lee
1722-1732	Robert Carter*
1734-1747	William Fairfax
1747-1762	George William Fairfax
1762-1782	Thomas Bryan Martin

This list is drawn from James Blaine Gouger III, "Agricultural Change in the Northern Neck of Virginia 1700-1860: An Historical Geography," (Ph. D. Dissertation: University of Florida, 1976), pp. 99-100.

\*During his second agency, Robert Carter held a lease for the Northern Neck proprietary and thus collected all taxes and fees for himself.

tracts of land for themselves, and between the two of them, they had patented 32,000 acres by the dawn of the eighteenth century.<sup>27</sup> For most of their tenure, however, Brent and Fitzhugh remained no more successful than their predecessors in the collection of quitrents. Wary Northern Neck landowners continued to insist that their dues, if owed to any authority, belonged to the Crown. Brent tried the threat of doubled quitrents but succeeded only in attracting the censorious attention of the Virginia legislature. William Fitzhugh took a more conciliatory approach. He persuaded Richard Lee II of Westmoreland County to present himself for payment of back quitrents and thereby to confirm the rights of the proprietor. Slowly thereafter, other Northern Neck landowners did the same. As a result, their titles were cleared and their rights of possession were annually confirmed.<sup>28</sup>

By 1700 the terms of landholding on the Northern Neck were, from the point of view of the residents themselves, no different from those that prevailed elsewhere in Virginia. Northern Neck landowners paid an annual quitrent of one shilling for every fifty acres as did their fellow colonists living south of the Rappahannock. Terms of land acquisition were also comparable. The proprietary never acknowledged the useful system of headrights, but this strategy for claiming land was on the decline by 1700. Most Virginians by then acquired land through the purchase of a treasury right at the rate of five shillings for fifty acres. The Northern Neck composition fee worked in the same way and for the same price.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> James Blaine Gouger III, "Agricultural Change in the Northern Neck of Virginia 1700-1860: An Historical Geography," (Ph. D. Dissertation: University of Florida, 1976), pp. 83-85; Davis, editor, William Fitzhugh, p. 41.

<sup>28</sup> Freeman, v. 1, pp. 487-488. The only record of Richard Lee's role in establishing the authority of the proprietors on the Northern Neck is in Beverley, History and Present State, p. 94.



Upon the deaths of Brent and Fitzhugh, Lady Culpeper accepted the recommendation of the powerful London agent Micajah Perry and appointed Robert Carter of Corotoman in Lancaster County as her agent on the Northern Neck. During his ten-year term, Carter continued Brent's and Fitzhugh's self-aggrandizing custom, patenting for himself and his relatives a total of fourteen thousand acres.<sup>30</sup> Carter's agency ended in 1712 when Catherine Fairfax and her husband assumed control of the proprietary following the death of her mother. Lady Fairfax apparently mistrusted Carter and she sought advice concerning a replacement that eventually led her to recognize Thomas Lee of Machodoc in Westmoreland County as her resident representative.<sup>31</sup> Lee held the position until Catherine Fairfax's own death in 1719. During that time, he well served the proprietary, clarifying entries in the Northern Neck land books with the addition of surveyor's plats, touring the back country of the domain, and encouraging new settlement farther inland. Of course, Lee did not neglect his own interests during his term of office. By 1719 he had secured a total of sixteen thousand acres of Northern Neck land.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Gouger, "Agricultural Change," pp. 80-81; Freeman, George Washington, v. 1, p. 7; Gertrude E. Gray, Northern Neck Land Grants, 1694-1742 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1987).

<sup>30</sup> Gouger, "Agricultural Change," pp. 83-85; Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William, pp. 145-156.

<sup>31</sup> Lady Fairfax consulted the London merchant Thomas Corbin, who recognized Edmund Jennings as a likely agent. On this recommendation, Jennings succeeded in persuading Lady Fairfax not only to give him a lease for the proprietary in exchange for £425 a year but also to accept Thomas Lee as his representative in Virginia, as Jennings was at the time in London. Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William, pp. 145-146; Freeman, George Washington, v. 1, pp. 492-493.

<sup>32</sup> Paul C. Nagel, The Lees of Virginia: Seven Generations of an

On the death of Catherine Fairfax, Robert Carter approached her son, offering to lease the entire proprietary from the young man for an annual sum of £450. Diffident as he was toward his interests in Virginia, Lord Fairfax agreed. Carter took full advantage of this second agency to solidify his colonial wealth: he vigorously collected quitrents, which he was entitled to keep for himself, and he patented land in astonishing quantities. By the time he died in 1732, Carter owned 300,000 acres of land--most of it, of course, on the Northern Neck--and he had become both the the richest planter and the largest landowner in the colony. It is said that his contemporaries called him "King" Carter.<sup>33</sup>

The era of the high-handed agent ended with Carter. Alarmed by the liberties of acquisition Carter had taken, Lord Fairfax determined to assume control of the Northern Neck himself. He began by giving the agency of the Northern Neck to his cousin, William Fairfax, but with authority only to collect fees--not to grant land. William Fairfax, a resident and public official of Massachusetts, responded to this appointment by moving south in 1734 to take up residence in King George County.<sup>34</sup> The following year, Lord Fairfax himself sailed to Virginia, determined in his goal of settling and recording the geographic extent of his claim. Completed in 1737, this detailed traversal and survey represented the Northern Neck as extending deep into the back country to the "first springs" of the Potomac and the Rappahannock. Fairfax was

American Family (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 36; Freeman, George Washington, v. 1, p. 494.

<sup>33</sup> Gouger, "Agricultural Change," pp. 83-85; Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William, p. 271. One reference to the tradition that Robert Carter of Corotoman was known as "King" Carter is in "Virginia Council Journals, 1726-1753," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 32 (January 1924), p. 18.

<sup>34</sup> Freeman, George Washington, v. 1, pp. 501-502; Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William, pp. 271-272.

probably not surprised that such an ambitious description of his holdings should meet with resistance from Virginia's colonial government. He responded to this opposition by sailing back to England in 1737 to present his case before the Privy Council.

Though the progress of his appeal was glacial, Fairfax eventually prevailed. In 1745, he received confirmation that the Northern Neck fairly encompassed all the land he had claimed--a total of six million acres.<sup>35</sup> By this date, of course, the Tidewater counties of the Northern Neck had long been settled. Subsequent patents were almost entirely for land in the Piedmont and Valley regions. Two years after the success of his suit, Thomas, Lord Fairfax immigrated to Virginia and took up residence near Winchester amidst the developing western regions of his domain. His tenure and his supervision of the proprietary lasted unchallenged until his death in 1781.<sup>36</sup>

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In both scholarly and popular discussions, and in historical as well as modern accounts, the Northern Neck is often portrayed as

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<sup>35</sup> Freeman, George Washington, v. 1, pp. 502-510; Billings, Selby, and Tate, Colonial Virginia, p. 210.

<sup>36</sup> Because he was living in Virginia, Fairfax's proprietary survived a 1775 act of the Virginia assembly ordering confiscation of the property of all British subjects. The proprietary ended with his death, however, because Fairfax's heirs lived in England. A treaty of peace between Britain and the newly independent colonies had not yet been confirmed. Citing "reason to suppose that the said proprietorship hath descended upon alien enemies," the Virginia assembly in 1782 suspended the payment of quitrents to proprietary agents and in 1785 took steps to confiscate the Northern Neck land records. Robert, seventh Lord Fairfax, filed for compensation for the loss of his quitrents in 1786. Gouger, "Agricultural Change," p. 109; Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William, p. 648; Hening, Statutes, v. 10, pp. 66-71, v. 11, pp. 112-129, v. 12, pp. 111-112.

distinct in appearance and character from other regions of eastern Virginia. There is indeed some documentary evidence that eighteenth-century inhabitants of the Northern Neck were different from other Virginians. An independence of spirit and skepticism toward authority may have been one result of the peninsula's buffered distance from the center of colonial power. Governor Gooch once characterized the Northern Neck as "a part of the country remote from the seat of government, where the common people are generally of a more turbulent and unruly disposition than anywhere else." North of the Rappahannock, he remarked on another occasion, "drinking and boxing is too much in fashion."<sup>37</sup> Then, too, in a region where the ultimate source of their land titles was so long in question, planters must have found it easy to question or ignore rules and institutions that prevailed elsewhere. William Byrd reported in 1723 that a law designed to raise the price of tobacco by limiting its production was "very sparingly [executed] in the Northern Neck."<sup>38</sup>

In most instances, however, the Northern Neck's distinctive appearance and character are attributed to the liberal land policies of the colonial proprietors. The argument runs this way: because agents of the Northern Neck proprietary did not stipulate that a planter must seat and cultivate his land in order to secure his title, well-to-do Virginians could acquire vast tracts of land without troubling themselves to improve them. Because most of the best land was engrossed in this way, the Northern Neck was populated by a combination of great landholders and their numerous tenants. Thus

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<sup>37</sup> William Gooch quoted in Richard Morton, Colonial Virginia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), v. 2, pp. 541, 525-526.

<sup>38</sup> William Byrd II to Micajah Perry, quoted in Marc Egnall, A Mighty Empire: The Origins of the American Revolution (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 89.

the Northern Neck fostered what one scholar called "a new manorial, almost a new feudal age in Virginia."<sup>39</sup> Another historian has even drawn an indirect connection between such apparently prevalent conditions on the Northern Neck and the origins of the American Revolution. With their tradition of vast landholdings and their imperious habits of command, residents of the Northern Neck were more aggressive than their fellow Virginians in pressing for westward expansion. Their actions and demands eventually generated conflict with France in the Ohio Valley and thereafter with British authorities as well.<sup>40</sup>

While there can be little doubt that the Northern Neck's long status as a proprietary grant contributed to the singular outlook of its colonial inhabitants, documentary sources do not sustain the common impression that the acquisition and distribution of land there resulted in a countryside that was significantly different.<sup>41</sup> Proprietary patents may appear to have favored land speculators because, unlike the legal terms of patents south of the Rappahannock, they did not stipulate that the newly acquired land be

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<sup>39</sup> Freeman, George Washington, v. 1, p. 14.

<sup>40</sup> Egnall, Mighty Empire, pp. 87-101.

<sup>41</sup> Only beyond the Fall Line--and especially west of the Blue Ridge--did privileged grantees of vast speculative tracts determine the course of immigration and settlement to any substantial degree. See Turk McCleskey, "Rich Land, Poor Prospects: Real Estate and the Formation of a Social Elite in Augusta County, Virginia, 1738-1770," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 98 (July 1990), pp. 449-486. Robert D. Mitchell has probably inadvertently contributed to the general conclusion that the Northern Neck was a realm of large landholdings by commenting on the difference between the size of colonial tracts on either side of the "Fairfax line." Readers apparently overlook Mitchell's focus on the Valley region of the Northern Neck and not the Tidewater. Robert D. Mitchell, "The Shenandoah Valley Frontier," Annals of the Association of American Geographers 62 (September 1972), pp. 461-486.

occupied or improved. But colonial Virginia laws requiring planters to build a small house, settle livestock, or clear and plant a crop on patented land were never well enforced.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, regulations concerning quitrents on the Northern Neck made substantial landholding moderately more expensive than it was elsewhere in colonial Virginia. A Northern Neck planter was expected to pay annual quitrents of five shillings rather than two for every hundred acres he owned above the initial one hundred. Above six hundred acres, the charge increased to ten shillings for every hundred acres. If Northern Neck regulations fostered the acquisition and maintenance of "immense baronies" in the Tidewater region, they were only those of the opportunistic proprietary agents George Brent, William Fitzhugh, Robert Carter, Thomas Lee, and their fortunate descendants.<sup>43</sup>

Most wealthy Northern Neck planters like the Tayloes, the Corbins, and the Washingtons acquired their land under circumstances and in quantities little different from those that prevailed in other parts of eastern Virginia.<sup>44</sup> While such great landowners as these may have figured prominently on the Northern Neck countryside, they were in fact no more numerous than their peers south of the Rappahannock. In the third quarter of the eighteenth century, planters who owned over five hundred acres represented 10 percent of the landholding population in Norfolk County. In Richmond County, by contrast, they represented less than

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<sup>42</sup> Freeman, George Washington, v. 1, p. 7; Sarah S. Hughes, Surveyors and Statesmen: Land Measuring in Colonial Virginia (Richmond: Virginia Association of Surveyors, 1979).

<sup>43</sup> Freeman, George Washington, v. 1, p. 7; Marc Egnall characterized the Northern Neck as a realm of "immense baronies," A Mighty Empire, p. 89.

<sup>44</sup> See the catalog entries for Blenheim, Peckatone, and Popes Creek.

8 percent of all landholders (table 2).

If the Northern Neck was no more dominated by vast manorial estates than other regions of eastern Virginia, so too it was no more heavily populated by tenants.<sup>45</sup> Some large planters like Robert Carter of Nomini Hall chose to rent much of their less accessible acreage to tenants.<sup>46</sup> Others like Landon Carter of Sabine Hall preferred to partition their holdings into a home plantation and a series of quarter tracts staffed by field slaves and supervised by slave foremen or hired overseers.<sup>47</sup> In either case, however, landless men were no more prevalent on the Northern Neck than they were in the rest of Virginia. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, only about half of Virginia's adult male population could call themselves landowners.<sup>48</sup> In 1782 among the four eastern counties of the Northern Neck, 57 percent of all heads of household owned some land.<sup>49</sup> Thus despite its distinct and colorful

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<sup>45</sup> Willard F. Bliss's impressionistic summary of documentary references to tenancy is the insubstantial foundation for the prevalent belief that the early Northern Neck population was thick with tenants. Willard F. Bliss, "The Rise of Tenancy in Virginia," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 58 (October 1950), pp. 427-441.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Agreement between John Allison, tenant, and Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, 30 November 1776; Agreement between Richard Simpson, tenant, and Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, 30 August 1787; Agreement between Francis Walker, tenant, and Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, 14 December 1789; Carter Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>47</sup> Jack P. Greene, editor, The Diary of Colonel Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778 (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1965), 2 volumes.

<sup>48</sup> Billings, Selby, and Tate, Colonial Virginia, pp. 210-211.

<sup>49</sup> Of a total of 2699 heads of household in Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties in the early 1780s, only 1558, or 57.7 percent, were identified as landholders. Land Tax Lists for Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and

TABLE 2: LANDHOLDING IN RICHMOND AND NORFOLK COUNTIES  
1768 AND 1771

<u>NUMBER</u> <u>OF ACRES</u>	<u>RD. PERCENT</u> <u>OF TOTAL</u>	<u>NOR. PERCENT</u> <u>OF TOTAL</u>	<u>RD. CUMUL.</u> <u>% OF TOTAL</u>	<u>NOR. CUMUL.</u> <u>% OF TOTAL</u>
2000+	1.7	0.6	1.7	0.6
1501-2000	0.8	0.4	2.5	1.0
1001-1500	3.4	2.2	5.9	3.2
901-1000	0.8	2.0	6.8	5.2
801-900	1.3	1.2	8.1	6.4
701-800	0.4	1.2	8.5	7.6
601-700	2.5	0.8	11.0	8.4
501-600	2.1	1.6	13.1	9.9
401-500	4.7	4.2	17.8	14.1
301-400	8.9	6.4	26.7	20.5
201-300	13.1	14.1	39.8	34.7
100-200	41.5	42.6	81.4	77.3
25-99	18.2	20.5	99.6	97.8
0-24	0.4	2.2	100.0	100.0
TOTALS	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

These calculations are based on the 236 planters who owned land in Richmond County in 1768 and the 502 planters who owned land in Norfolk County in 1770. Material for this table was drawn from Robert E. Brown and B. Katherine Brown, Virginia 1705-1786: Democracy or Aristocracy? (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1964), p. 13.



institutional and political histories, despite its splendid sense of detachment and isolation, the Tidewater landscape of the Northern Neck was a colonial Virginia landscape in every significant respect.

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Westmoreland Counties, 1782; Personal Property Tax Lists for Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties, 1787. For more on late eighteenth-century patterns of landholding on the Northern Neck, see Chapter 2.

## CHAPTER 2: THE LANDSCAPE OF THE NORTHERN NECK

One writer has observed that the Northern Neck is virtually an island formed by the Rappahannock and the Potomac rivers and by the Chesapeake Bay. While it is true that Northumberland and Lancaster Counties have many of the qualities of places surrounded entirely by water, Westmoreland and Richmond counties convey more the sense of a peninsula, and these four lower counties are anchored securely to Piedmont Virginia by the counties of Stafford and King George. Still, in an area of over nine hundred square miles, almost no spot is more than five miles from the water.<sup>1</sup>

Most eighteenth-century visitors approached the Northern Neck by water: their letters and diaries record their impression that the most interesting, varied aspects of life were carried on along the extensive shores. Even overland travelers had to deal with the ubiquitous branches and estuaries by way of low bridges formed from rows of logs or--more frequently--through fords and ferries.<sup>2</sup> In 1765, an English visitor found the Virginia

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<sup>1</sup> Clifford C. Presnall, "Ferry of the Northern Neck of Virginia," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 29 (December 1979), p. 3258.

<sup>2</sup> Johann David Schoepf, Travels in the Confederation (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1911), v. 2, pp. 43-44; Nicholas Cresswell, The Diary of Nicholas Cresswell (New York: Dial Press, 1924), p. 26; Elizabeth Cometti, editor, The American Journals of Lt. John Enys (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1976), p. 255. At the end of the century, a Frenchman traveled over Tidewater Virginia roads "occasionally bridged, across ditches, streams or mudholes, by small tree trunks placed close together." Kenneth Roberts and Anna M. Roberts, editors, Moreau de St. Mery's American Journey, 1793-

lowcountry so veined by water "that the ferries, which would retard in another country, rather accelerate their meeting here."<sup>3</sup> The composition of the land was also a matter of interest to newcomers, especially to those like Nicholas Cresswell who thought they might stay. In the 1770s this young Englishman found the soil of the Northern Neck to be invitingly free of stones, but sandy and barren in appearance. He was surprised to observe that it produced "excellent garden stuff."<sup>4</sup> He might have added that the soil was also reasonably kind to tobacco, corn, and small grains.

Next to waterways, visitors to the Northern Neck mentioned the woodlands most frequently. At least one visitor thought them oppressive as he passed along the road between Alexandria and Petersburg "for a great part of the way through dreary forests of pine."<sup>5</sup> Another traveler, proceeding south toward Leedstown in Westmoreland County, saw the same landscape differently. "You ride through a pretty fine wood," he wrote, "where there is a new road cut and pass by Mrs. Jett's house. The pines now and then form quite an arch over your head. The road is delightful."<sup>6</sup>

1798 (New York: Doubleday, 1947), p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> "Journal of Lord Adam Gordon," in Howard H. Peckman, editor, Narratives of Colonial America (Chicago: R. R. Donnelley and Sons, 1971), pp. 252-253. Over the course of the eighteenth century, thirty-five ferries were in operation on the Northern Neck at various times. See Presnall, "Ferry of the Northern Neck," p. 3278.

<sup>4</sup> Cresswell commented on the character of the soil when he was near Urbanna, and again as he was traveling through Stafford County. Cresswell, Diary, pp. 16 and 56.

<sup>5</sup> John Cook Wyllie, editor, "Observations Made During a Short Residence in Virginia in a Letter from Thomas H. Palmer, May 30, 1814," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 76 (October 1968), p. 391.

<sup>6</sup> Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling, editors, Quebec to Carolina 1785-1786: Being the Travel Diary and Observations of

Over the course of the eighteenth century increasing quantities of the forest land were cleared by Northern Neck planters in need of fresh fields to cultivate.<sup>7</sup> This daunting work required laborers to burn saplings and underbrush or to yank and drag them to the perimeters of the fields, where they served as makeshift fences. Mature trees were still dispatched by the "girdling" technique that seventeenth-century English immigrants had learned from Chesapeake Indians. Once killed by encompassing incisions through the bark, the trees were allowed to stand amidst the supplanting crops until they rotted, or until there was time to burn them.<sup>8</sup> European travelers often denounced the "awful ruins [of] vast limbs," and the "fire-blackened stumps" that were inevitable aspects of the agricultural countryside.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1680s a French visitor remarked upon the curious Virginia Robert Hunter, Jr., a Young Merchant of London (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1943), p. 201.

<sup>7</sup> By the early nineteenth century, the diminishing of forests had become a problem for inhabitants of the Northern Neck. In 1830, Frederick Wood of Kennersley in Northumberland County complained to his brother: "our land could not afford wood to cut many years longer at 50 cords per year, which is what I generally cut." Frederick Wood to George Wood, 10 April 1830, Bulletin of Northumberland County Historical Society, 8 (1971), pp. 57-58.

<sup>8</sup> There are numerous colonial descriptions of the girdling process. A good one was written in 1772 by William Eddis in his Letters from America, Aubrey C. Land, editor, (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1969), p. 66. For fencing in early Virginia, see Vanessa E. Patrick, "Partitioning the Landscape: The Fence in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Unpublished Research Report, Department of Architectural Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1983.

<sup>9</sup> The first passage appears in Thomas Anburey, Travels through the Interior Parts of America (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1923), v. 2, pp. 188-189. The second passage is taken from Roberts, editors, Moreau de St. Mery, p. 69

practice of fencing crops and allowing livestock to roam free.<sup>10</sup> Although there are occasional eighteenth-century references to pastures and paddocks on the Northern Neck, most planters apparently continued the labor-saving habit of protecting their cultivated fields and allowing their animals to forage for themselves.<sup>11</sup> Probably only the most affluent planters could afford fenced enclosures large enough to accommodate their livestock. Chesapeake travelers mentioned an impressive variety of fence designs involving combinations of posts, rails, stakes, and pales. The most frequently described of the available options was the Virginia "worm" fence, composed of stacked rails positioned "in a zigzag manner, so that the fence is a series of projecting and inverted angles."<sup>12</sup> The distinctive and portable worm fence caught the attention of other American colonists as well as Europeans (fig 1). According to one observer, "the New-Englanders have a saying, when a man is in liquor, he is making Virginia fences."<sup>13</sup>

It is likely that the persistent juxtaposition of plentiful wood and expensive labor kept Chesapeake fences looking rough and unfinished throughout the colonial period, but at least by the middle of the eighteenth century some plantations were equipped with well finished enclosures. In 1751 the vestry of Wicomico Parish in Northumberland County directed that the parish glebe should have a garden of 1200 square feet. The surrounding fence was to be

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<sup>10</sup> Durand de Dauphine, A Huguenot Exile in Virginia, Gilbert Chinard, editor (New York: The Press of the Pioneers, 1934), pp. 117-118 and 122.

<sup>11</sup> Grant advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 3 November 1768, p. 3, c. 1. Schoepf observed in 1783 that Virginia livestock must roam about and "shift for themselves." Schoepf, Travels in the Confederation, v. 2, p. 89.

<sup>12</sup> Roberts and Roberts, editors, Moreau de St. Mery, p. 69.

<sup>13</sup> Anburey, Travels through the Interior Parts, v. 2, p. 188.



Fig. 1. Benjamin Henry Latrobe, "Study for An Essay on Landscape,"  
Scene in Eastern Virginia, 1790s. (Virginia State Library and  
Archives.)

supported on mauled white oak posts with earthfast butts charred to retard rotting. Two or three sawn horizontal rails were to be nailed to these posts, and the gaps were to be closed by four-inch pales, nailed to the rails at 4-inch or 5-inch intervals. Workmen were to fill a "slot" beneath the pales so that the garden might be kept safe from animals willing to burrow.<sup>14</sup>

Most Northern Neck fences protected the Chesapeake staples: tobacco and wheat for income, corn for home-grown sustenance. There were also the gardens, filled with the legume, gourd, and root crops that made planters' diets more appealing and nutritious.<sup>15</sup> Fencing often enclosed the peach and apple orchards that were everywhere to be seen. Eighteenth-century travelers wrote with obvious pleasure of sampling ripe Virginia fruit, but the evidence suggests that the bulk of any orchard's yield was devoted to production of cider, beer, and brandy. In 1771 William Peachey of Richmond County boasted that his orchard yearly produced "1000 gallons of good cyder, and 100 of brandy."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Vestry Book of Wicomico Parish, Northumberland County, 1703-1795, f. 56, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>15</sup> In 1764 Joseph Chinn planted the garden at Morattico in Lancaster County with savoy cabbages, potatoes, watermelons, cymplings, cucumbers, broccoli, and cauliflower. Rawleigh Downman to Joseph Chinn, 12 November 1764, Joseph Ball Letterbook 1743-1780, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

<sup>16</sup> Peachy advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 14 February 1771, p. 3, c. 1. Schoepf wrote that most Virginians's "domestic drinks are a sour, half-flat, cloudy cyder, persimon beer, apple and peach whiskey." Schoepf, Travels in the Confederation, v. 2, p. 101. Lucinda Lee wrote of snacking on peaches at Pecatone in Westmoreland County. Lucinda Lee, Diary of a Young Lady of Virginia, 1782 (Baltimore: John Murphy, 1871), p. 40. John Harrower was especially fond of the cherries available at Belvedera on the south side of the Rappahannock River. See Edward Miles Riley,

The water, woods, fields, and crops mentioned in colonial travel accounts were all significant components of the eighteenth-century Virginia countryside. But visitors missed a great deal more than they saw. This is because the landscape of the Northern Neck--of all Virginia--was not shaped for the convenience or even the comprehension of outsiders. It was a world meant for the observation and participation of its inhabitants.<sup>17</sup> This reality was encountered but only partly recognized by Johann David Schoepf, a German traveler who struggled in 1783 to find his way overland across the Northern Neck:

Crossing Acquia Creek we came by all manner of roads to the Rappahannock, not without having gone wrong at times; for the universal answer one gets, on asking the way is: keep in the main road, or straight on;--everybody knowing the roads in the parish and thinking that even strangers must find it easy to keep in the straight path which commonly is very crooked.<sup>18</sup>

What did the eighteenth-century residents of the Northern Neck see when they scanned the countryside around them? Clues survive in the descriptions planters wrote when they offered their property for sale. They mentioned springs for fresh water, good fishing spots, and convenient places to harvest oysters. Among the assets editor, The Journal of John Harrower, An Indentured Servant in the Colony of Virginia 1773-1776 (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), pp. 45, 97, and 151.

<sup>17</sup> Dell Upton deals with this topic in "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Places: A Quarterly Journal of Environmental Design 2 (Winter 1985), pp. 59-72: reprinted in Robert Blair St. George, editor, Material Culture in America 1600-1860 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp. 357-369.

<sup>18</sup> Schoepf, Travels in the Confederation, v. 2, p. 41.



they counted were stands of hardwood for building boats and houses.<sup>19</sup> Rich swamp land offered compost for higher and drier fields as well as likely places to hunt waterfowl. Firmer marshland could host foraging cattle and hogs or sustain transformation into proper meadows.<sup>20</sup> There were coves to shelter watercraft, high ground safe from flooding, promising sites for mills on unfailing streams of water. All of these features--and, undoubtedly, numerous others--met the gaze of inhabitants as they made their way at their own convenience across the fields and along the watercourses of the Northern Neck. Of course, the men who made these lists of assets were among the privileged landowning minority, and the phrasing of their descriptions suggests the perspective of those who have the wealth or the leisure to realize the potential of the advantages they saw (fig. 2).<sup>21</sup> Still, the countryside must have appeared no less differentiated--if somewhat less malleable--to colonists with considerably fewer options.

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<sup>19</sup> For more on landscape features described in Virginia Gazette advertisements, see Chapter 3.

<sup>20</sup> Hugh Jones described how Virginians allowed their livestock to graze on marshland in Hugh Jones, The Present State of Virginia, Richard L. Morton, editor (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956), p. 78; Corbin Griffin wrote of Lancaster County meadows made from marshland in Virginia Gazette (Purdie), 10 July 1778, p. 2, c. 2.

<sup>21</sup> The average size of Northern Neck tracts listed for sale in the Virginia Gazette from 1736 to 1780 was 436 acres. Using landholding as an indication of wealth, and allowing Lancaster and Richmond Counties to represent the entire Northern Neck, it is possible to place the buyers and sellers of these properties among the top 17 percent of the entire landholding population. Robert E. and B. Katherine Brown, Virginia 1705-1786: Democracy or Aristocracy? (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964), p. 13.

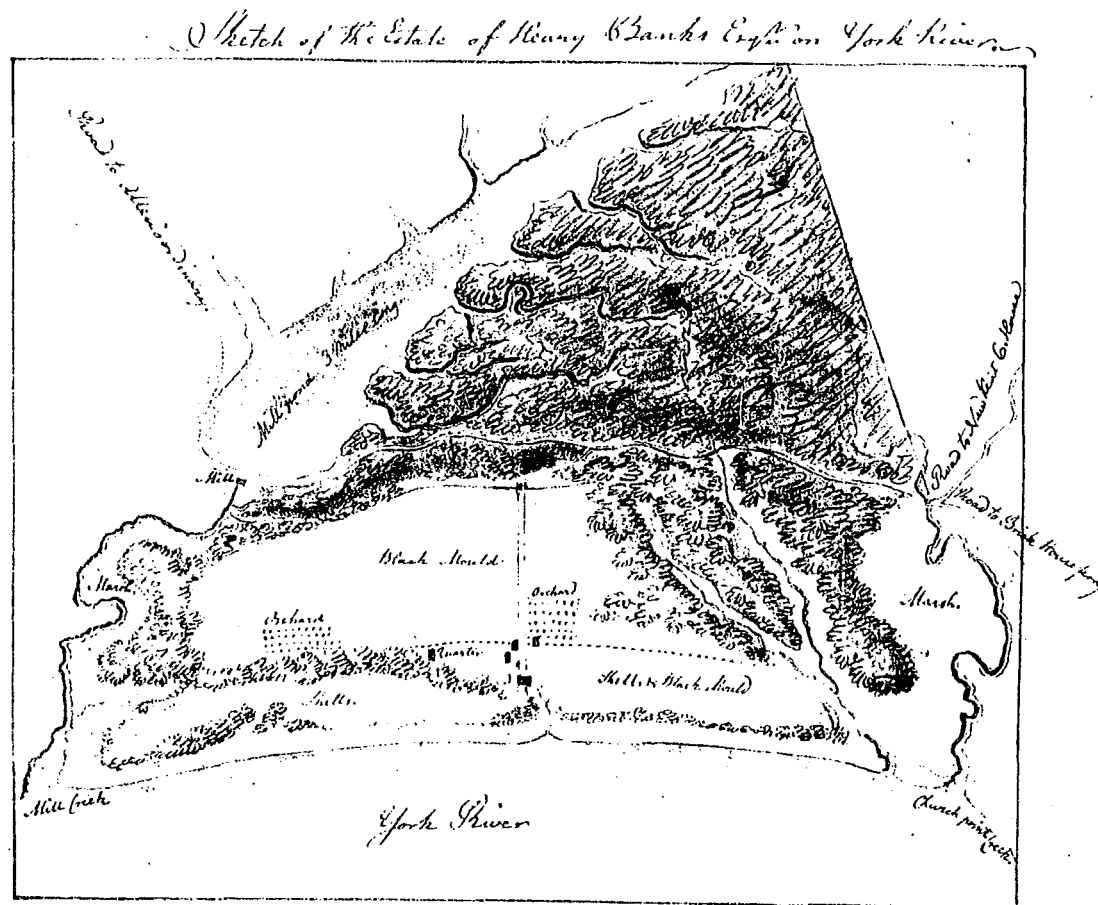


Fig. 2. Benjamin Henry Latrobe, "Sketch of the Estate of Henry Banks, Esqr. on York River," New Kent County, Virginia, 1797. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania.)

Just as the residents of the Northern Neck could look across the land and water to perceive likely meadow ground and oyster beds, so they could identify boundaries that delineated the various forms of landholding. Thomas Amburey was exasperated by Virginians who expected him to find his way over the countryside by recognizing, among other things, "the fence of such a one's plantation."<sup>22</sup> Showing admiring guests around Mount Vernon, George Washington was careful to draw their attention to "a small rivulet [that] divides the General's estate from a neighboring farmer's."<sup>23</sup> Until the time of the Revolution, Anglican vestries of the Northern Neck devoted substantial quantities of time and energy to the task of processioneering--a systematic examination of all property lines within each parish.<sup>24</sup> To eighteenth-century Virginians, then, the way the land was distributed and the way its cultivation was organized was as much a part of the visible landscape as the fencelines and the fishing holes.

In 1774 Landon Carter of Richmond County reported that he owed the proprietor of the Northern Neck £755 in unpaid quitrents for 44,294 acres of land.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps as much as three quarters of this land lay above the fall line, but Carter owned and managed at least eight fully settled plantations in the Tidewater region of the Northern Neck as well.<sup>26</sup> Landon Carter was not the only grand

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<sup>22</sup> Amburey, Travels through the Interior Parts, v. 2, pp. 196-197.

<sup>23</sup> Wright and Tinling, editors, Quebec to Carolina, p. 191.

<sup>24</sup> Rhys Isaac discusses the significance of processioneering in The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p. 20.

<sup>25</sup> These amounts are derived from lists of quitrents outstanding sent to Landon Carter by various agents of Lord Fairfax. Carter Family Papers 1729-1788, Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

planter on the Northern Neck, but it is important to recognize that the Carters, the Lees, the Tayloes, the Corbins, and the several other Northern Neck families known for their vast colonial estates were extraordinary in their landed wealth, and thus are extraordinarily visible among surviving documents.

Most eighteenth-century Northern Neck landowners held tracts that were decidedly modest size. In the last quarter of the century, nearly 63 percent of the landed population owned two hundred acres or less (table 1).<sup>27</sup> According to the imperatives of the Chesapeake agricultural economy, two hundred acres of land might support a family in relative comfort, but many of these small landholding planters owned considerably smaller tracts and thus probably lived much closer to the margin of financial security. Some small planters struggled to get by, and many were decidedly poor. Moreover, they shared the countryside with numerous inhabitants who owned no land at all. By 1782, fully 1141--or about 42 percent--of the total 2699 heads of household on the Northern Neck of Virginia were entirely landless. While not all of these landless people were destitute, they swelled the numbers of those Northern Neck residents whose economic situation and social standing were modest at best.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> In addition to Sabine Hall, there was the Fork, Mangorike, and Lansdowne in Richmond County, Bloughpoint, Jones Place, and Old Place in Northumberland County, and Round Hill in King George County. Jack P. Greene, The Diary of Colonel Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778 (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1965), v. 1, pp. 4-5.

<sup>27</sup> Brown and Brown, Virginia 1705-1786, p. 13.

<sup>28</sup> The landless population would be significantly higher than this 42 percent if the number of white males over the age of sixteen were added to this total list of heads of household. Some historians have estimated that by the middle of the eighteenth century, fully half of the white men in Virginia were landless. Isaac,

TABLE 1: NORTHERN NECK HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD IN 1782

<u>ACRES</u> <u>OWNED</u>	<u>NUMBER OF</u> <u>HOUSEHOLDERS</u>	<u>PERCENT</u> <u>OF TOTAL</u>	<u>CUMULATIVE</u> <u>PERCENT</u>
0	1141	42.3	42.3
1-49	128	4.7	47.0
50-99	331	12.3	59.3
100-199	521	19.3	78.6
200-299	239	8.9	87.4
300-399	97	3.6	91.0
400-499	50	1.9	92.9
500-599	45	1.7	94.6
600-699	30	1.1	95.7
700-799	18	0.7	96.3
800-899	10	0.4	96.7
900-999	12	0.4	97.1
1000-1500	39	1.5	98.6
1500-2000	18	0.7	99.3
2000+	20	0.7	100.0
TOTALS	2699	100.0	100.0

These figures are based on information in the 1782 Land Tax Records and 1787 Personal Property Tax Records for Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

How did landless people live in a region where agriculture was the foundation of wealth and where, by the middle of the eighteenth century, even skilled labor was performed by slaves?<sup>29</sup> One answer can be inferred from the way in which large landowners subdivided their acres. An affluent planter typically established a "seat" or resident plantation of several hundred acres where he settled his family amidst whatever amenities suited their means or tastes. Cultivation of the surrounding land was usually directed by the planter himself, although some men could afford overseers for even their home plantations.<sup>30</sup> In either case, slaves provided most of the labor. The planter's remaining land was partitioned into one or more separate "quarters" or "tenements," depending on whether production was the responsibility of overseers or of tenants. These plantations could be entirely separate landholdings, or they could be outlying sections of a single large tract. In 1765 John Gordon offered for sale a Richmond County property of twelve hundred contiguous acres that were organized into a home plantation as well as "four tenements, with good dwellinghouses and other necessary houses."<sup>31</sup> Plantations relegated to overseers or renters were

Transformation of Virginia, p. 21; Warren M. Billings, John E. Selby, and Thad W. Tate, Colonial Virginia: A History (White Plains, New York: KTO Press, 1986), pp. 210-211.

<sup>29</sup> Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia 1650-1750 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), p. 239.

<sup>30</sup> John Harrower's master William Daingerfield kept an overseer at his home plantation during the 1770s. Riley, editor, Journal of Harrower, pp. 144-145. In 1751, John Holt published an advertisement for an overseer, "a single man to live in my family," at his home plantation on Hog Island. Holt advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Hunter), 14 November 1751, p. 3, c. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Gordon advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Royle), 25 October 1765, p. 4, c. 2

often remote in the sense that they were inconvenient to waterways, major roads, and such facilities as churches and courthouses, but they were widespread components of the Northern Neck countryside.<sup>32</sup>

In 1724 the Reverend Hugh Jones described how Virginia slaves commonly worked on quarters:

[I]n about six in a gang, under the direction of an overseer, or bailiff; who takes care that they tend such land as the owner allots and orders, upon which they raise hogs, and cattle, and plant Indian corn (or maize) and tobacco for the use of their master; out of which the overseer has dividend (or share) in proportion to the number of hands including himself; this with several privileges is his salary . . .<sup>33</sup>

This organization of labor was apparently characteristic of Northern Neck quarters throughout the eighteenth century. In 1738 Robert Eskridge wanted to sell a five hundred-acre quarter in Westmoreland County "lying on Potowmack River, joining to the land of Col. Gawin Corbin...with an overseer's house, quarters [in this context, houses for the slaves], and three large tobacco-houses, a good orchard, well wooded, watered &c."<sup>34</sup> Thirty years later, James and John Mercer of Stafford County announced in the Virginia Gazette that they were looking for a "farmer who will undertake the management of about 80 slaves, all settled within six miles of each other, to be employed in making of grain."<sup>35</sup> As Hugh Jones indicated, overseers worked

<sup>32</sup> Macrae and Nicholson advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 7 March 1771, p. 3, c. 2.

<sup>33</sup> Jones, Present State of Virginia, p. 75.

<sup>34</sup> Eskridge advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Parks), 7 April 1738, p. 4, c. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Mercer advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 5 November 1767, p. 4, c. 1.

as employees of the landowners, who remained responsible for equipping the quarters with tools, fences, buildings, and other necessities. Overseers might enjoy autonomy on their designated tract and with their assigned work force, but they were dependent on their employers for directions and accountable to them for profits.<sup>36</sup>

Tenants, by contrast, seem to have behaved in many respects like landowning planters. During the last twenty years of the eighteenth century, "a Mr. Potts lived quite independently on his plantation in Northumberland County--except that once a year, he paid rent in the form of cash or tobacco to Robert Carter of Nomini Hall."<sup>37</sup> While tenants were clearly on the less enviable end of leasing agreements with landowners who had more acres than they could manage themselves, some lessees were able to arrange profitable situations. This was possible for those individuals who, in 1752, might have approached John Mercer about some of the "good fresh Land" in Fairfax County that he planned to lease for three lives.<sup>38</sup> Still, many tenants were forced to settle for much less stable positions. After 1785 Robert Carter would rent his tenements for only one year at a time.<sup>39</sup> In the last quarter of the eighteenth century James Mercer had tenants on his Stafford County tract who held their leases at his will. No matter how ample their harvest and

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<sup>36</sup> John Harrower described Colonel Daingerfield's trip to his Chickahominy quarter to collect profits from the overseer there. Riley, editor, Journal of Harrower, p. 100.

<sup>37</sup> J. Motley Booker, "Robert Carter of Nomini Hall: Abstracts from Letters, 1774-1784," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 16 (December 1966), p. 1526.

<sup>38</sup> Mercer advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Hunter), 4 March 1752, p. 3, c. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Willard F. Bliss, "The Rise of Tenancy in Virginia," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 58 (October 1950), p. 438.



fat their livestock, these renters could not consider themselves to be in secure or agreeable circumstances. Furthermore, tenants were often poor and out of options. James Mercer had on his Northern Neck land "a very ancient woman, whom I have promised not to move during her life, on account of her age."<sup>40</sup> In 1778 Mercer wrote of another tenant who came to see him:

[A]bout his rents his story as usual among other things that he is poor, this you can judge of if he has a wife and seven children and only two cows and a horse he is certainly poor enough and in that case I care not whether I get a shilling rent since my time, but he should pay arrears . . .<sup>41</sup>

In the eighteenth century, then, the Northern Neck was a region where the country seats of the wealthier planters were one dramatic component of the landscape, but most of the countryside was partitioned and inhabited in a much more humble fashion. On tracts of moderate size, resident owners or lessees tended their tobacco fields and wood lots with the help of their wives, children, and--only possibly--a slave or two. Interspersed among these plantations were quarters where gangs of slaves performed the same tasks under the calculating eyes of their overseers. These were the colonists who populated much of this sparsely settled, overwhelmingly rural Chesapeake peninsula, and the improvements within the means of their wealth, energy, or inclination ranged in quality from unpretentious comfort to ramshackle misery. The architectural landscape of the eighteenth-century Northern Neck

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<sup>40</sup> Mercer advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie), 5 December 1777, p. 3, c. 2.

<sup>41</sup> James Mercer to Battaile Muse, 13 June 1778. Quoted in Bliss, "Rise of Tenancy," p. 435.

makes sense only in light of this reality.

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Usually the first and certainly the most common remark travelers made about Virginia buildings had to do with the way outbuildings clustered around dwellings "as a litter of pigs their mother."<sup>42</sup> Indications are that this comical simile applied not only to large rural estates like Belle Isle but also to the modest operations of smaller plantations. Spence Monroe's eighteenth-century house in Westmoreland County was attended by five outbuildings.<sup>43</sup> In 1768 the trustees for David Galloway advertised a two hundred-acre plantation on the Great Wicomico River in Northumberland County. The buildings on the site included "a dwelling-house, twenty by sixteen, a kitchen twelve feet square, and a tobacco house 32 by 16 double shedded, but few years built."<sup>44</sup> Though Galloway or his tenant occupied a dwelling that had only one major room and possibly a loft for sleeping above, there was still an entirely separate kitchen where meals could be prepared. Storage space for grain, meat, and tools--or perhaps shelter for the livestock--was available in the two sheds that flanked the tobacco house, where the planter's staple crop dried and cured.

Monroe and Galloway, however, were men of considerable resources, and it is important to recognize the presence--perhaps even the prevalence--of humbler homesteads. In 1780 Robert Carter wrote to a carpenter of his acquaintance:

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<sup>42</sup> Edward C. Carter II, editor, The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 1795-1798 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 101.

<sup>43</sup> Keith Egloff and Martha McCartney, "Excavations at the James Monroe Birthplace," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 31 (December 1981), pp. 3487-3488.

<sup>44</sup> Mills, Ritchie, and Parker advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 17 November 1768, p. 3, c. 1.

It is said that Mr. Robert Furgison of Lunenburg Parish, Richmond County, tailor, has sustained a very heavy loss very lately by fire, having his only house burned and almost all his effects therein. The said Furgison has not timber on his own tract to build him a dwelling house sixteen by twenty. On these considerations, I herein permit you to get twelve hundred boards and about sixteen hundred feet of plank from off . . . my land which . . . are for the use of Mr. Robert Furgison mentioned above.<sup>45</sup>

This unfortunate tailor had slept, cooked, and plied his craft all in the same one-room structure on a plot of land too small or too cut-over to provide any additional building material.<sup>46</sup> Numerous eighteenth-century travelers's references to lone roadside cabins or huts perched on clearings in the woods indicate that many colonial Virginians got by in similarly confined circumstances.<sup>47</sup> That Furgison and others like him might have preferred to distribute their goods and activities among several detached buildings is suggested by the determined initiative of another Northern Neck inhabitant of limited means. In a 1782 letter, Robert Carter described how a schoolhouse located on one of his quarters was dragged to a site near a main road, where it subsequently fell in or was partially dismantled. "Mrs. Jane Clark, widow, did carry the roof of said house near to her dwelling house and raise it on some logs, and...a cloth loom now stands there." Clark, one of Carter's tenants, went to

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<sup>45</sup> Quoted in J. Motley Booker, "Robert Carter of Nomini Hall," p. 1524.

<sup>46</sup> Furgison apparently lived on the thirty-acre tract that he owned in Richmond County. Richmond County Land Tax List, 1782, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>47</sup> Evelyn M. Acomb, editor, The Revolutionary Journal of Baron Ludwig von Closen 1780-1783 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), pp. 127 and 179.

considerable trouble to secure a separate building--not just a separate room--for her bulky loom.<sup>48</sup>

What sorts of buildings were likely to cluster about a rural eighteenth-century dwelling? Excepting the formal brick flankers at extraordinary sites like Belle Isle, Mount Airy, and Stratford, very few Northern Neck outbuildings survive. Furthermore, as with population and landholding, no truly systematic records exist. But eighteenth-century journals and travel accounts convey some distinct impressions concerning those outbuildings that probably occupied a range of possibility between the impressive rectilinear arrangements built by Lees and Carters and the isolated dwellings occupied by Furgisons and Clarks.

Hugh Jones wrote that in Virginia, "the kitchen [is] apart from the dwelling house, because of the smell of hot victuals, offensive in hot weather."<sup>49</sup> Recent historians have suspected that detached service buildings had less to do with unpleasant odors than with the determination to separate different social groups and their tasks.<sup>50</sup> Descriptions of kitchens that supply dimensions make it possible to gather that most kitchens were plain one- or two-room structures built to one story with perhaps a loft above the eaves. Surviving examples suggest that they were commonly 16 feet wide and between 16 and 24 feet long (fig. 3). They thus looked like most

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<sup>48</sup> Carter insisted that Clark vacate the dwelling and the hard-won loom house the following year. Quoted in J. Motley Booker, "Robert Carter of Nomini Hall," p. 1535.

<sup>49</sup> Jones, Present State of Virginia, p. 74.

<sup>50</sup> Cary Carson, "Doing History with Material Culture," Material Culture and the Study of American Life, Ian M. G. Quimby, editor, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), pp. 52-54; Dell Upton, "The Origins of Chesapeake Architecture," Three Centuries of Maryland Architecture (Annapolis: Maryland Historical Trust, 1982), pp. 44-57.



Fig. 3. Marmion Kitchen, King George County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)

early Virginia dwellings. Indeed, auxiliary or redundant dwellings were sometimes converted into kitchens. In 1757, the vestry of Christ Church Parish in Middlesex County thought the old glebe house might sustain just such a conversion.<sup>51</sup>

Detached dairies and smokehouses were also components of many Virginia plantation sites. Surviving examples suggest that both sorts of structures were almost always square in plan, with ground dimensions that ranged from 10 to 16 feet on each side. Built to enclose small but sustained fires and to support heavy loads of suspended pork, smokehouses--often called "meathouses" on the Northern Neck--were usually the most sturdily constructed building of any plantation group. Early Virginia dairies were often fitted with shelves on which perishable foods could be processed and stored. Louvred vents, deep eaves, tile floors, and insulated walls all helped to keep the interior temperature lower than elsewhere on the site.<sup>52</sup>

In 1785 an English visitor to Mount Vernon was surprised to see that Washington kept on his plantation "a well assorted store for the use of his family and servants."<sup>53</sup> Stores were surely

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<sup>51</sup> Vestry Book of Christ Church Parish, Middlesex County, 1663-1767, p. 288, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>52</sup> Sallie Arlyn Smith, "Chesapeake Dairies: A Prototypical Outbuilding Study of Southampton County, Virginia," (M. A. Thesis: University of Virginia, 1982). Some of these architectural details are drawn from the files of the Traditional Chesapeake Buildings Project, Department of Architectural Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1981-1987. For brief discussions of the approach and scope of this project see Edward A. Chappell, "Architectural Recording and the Open Air Museum," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture II, Camille Wells, editor, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), pp. 24-36 and Edward Chappell, "Beyond the Pale: Architectural Fieldwork for Colonial Williamsburg," Fresh Advices (November 1983), pp. i-iii.

extraordinary among the operations of small planters, tenants, and overseers, but they were reasonably frequent components of larger plantations. As their designation suggests, stores were built to shelter goods for sale, but they were less for the use of plantation residents--most of whom had little of value to spend or barter--than they were for the use of a planter's neighbors. In a region where inhabitants devoted much of their time and energy to the production of one or two crops for export, and where manufactured items were difficult to acquire from the few scattered towns, a plantation store stocked with a variety of goods could be a likely investment as well as a local convenience.

Surviving examples indicate that early Virginia plantation stores were about the size of other outbuildings, with 16, 24, and 32 feet among the most common ground dimensions (fig. 4). Stores characteristically had two distinct spaces: a square outer room fitted with counters and shelving, and a smaller counting room that was often heated, better finished, and accessible to the loft or upper story.<sup>54</sup> Descriptions of stores sometimes also mention cellars or lumber rooms for additional storage, and one Lancaster County store even had "a bed closet for an assistant to lie in."<sup>55</sup>

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Robert Beverley described Virginia tobacco houses as "all built of wood, as open and airy as is consistent with the keeping out of rain, which sort of building, is most convenient for the curing of tobacco."<sup>56</sup> Though it

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<sup>53</sup> Wright and Tinling, editors, Quebec to Carolina, p. 196.

<sup>54</sup> Edward A. Chappell, "Fieldwork in Virginia Stores," unpublished research report, Department of Architectural Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1982.

<sup>55</sup> Mills, Ritchie, and Parker advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 17 November 1768, p. 3, c. 1.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Beverley, The History and Present State of Virginia,

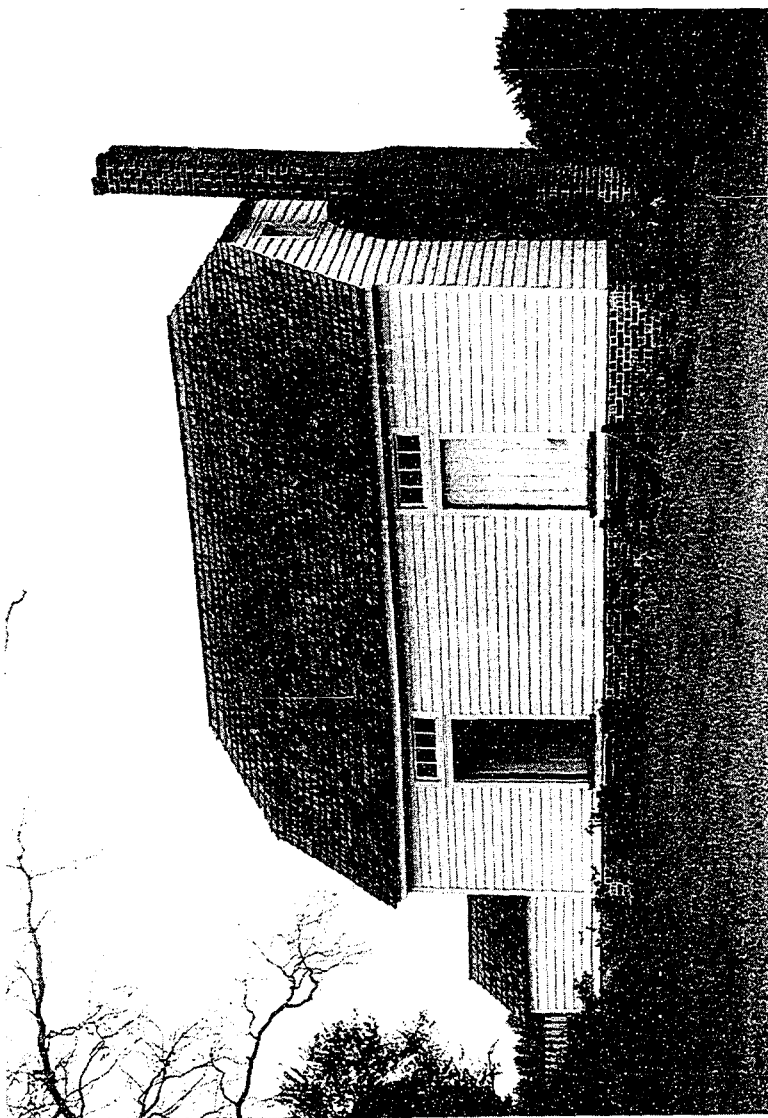


Fig. 4. Marmion Store, King George County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)



was declining in importance relative to wheat during Virginia's second colonial century, this temperamental crop remained of major significance to Northern Neck planters.<sup>57</sup> Of all the agricultural structures likely to be dispersed in the fields around the planter's dwelling and gaggle of service buildings, none was more numerous than tobacco houses. They were usually large buildings with rectangular dimensions and open, unfinished interiors with tiers of horizontal members from which the tobacco was hung. As Beverley suggested, tobacco houses often had a clapped-together appearance, for their loose siding was intended to provide ventilation as well as protection.

Virginia planters often had among their facilities at least one building they called a "barn," a structure similar in form and size to a tobacco house, but probably better sealed. Barns sometimes appeared on Chesapeake plantations in the company of stables, corn cribs, and granaries, a fact that suggests they had distinct functions of their own. But apparently, Virginia planters often used barns as shelter for wheat, corn, or livestock. Rawleigh Downman of Belle Isle in Lancaster County referred to both his granary and his stable as "barns."<sup>58</sup> In 1767 Samuel Washington of Stafford County had "a barn finished this year, 72 by 48, framed work" that was clearly big enough to serve several different purposes.<sup>59</sup>

Louis B. Wright, editor, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), p. 290.

<sup>57</sup> T. H. Breen, Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of the Revolution (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 46-58.

<sup>58</sup> Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia Policy No. 574, 19 February 1818, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>59</sup> Washington advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 19 February 1767, p. 4, c. 2.

Colonial documents not only offer information concerning the number, size, and function of plantation outbuildings, they also suggest how planters mentally ranked their outbuildings in terms of importance. A sequence of building projects undertaken at one eighteenth-century Virginia site--the glebe of Wicomico Parish in Northumberland County--provides a distinct perspective on this sort of architectural ranking.

The vestrymen of Wicomico Parish bought some two hundred acres of glebe land for the "support and maintainance" of their minister in 1726, but a full decade passed before they had a dwelling constructed on the site. Completed in 1736, the house was by all indications a one-room, single-story wooden structure with a gable-end chimney and possibly a loft. It accommodated all of the minister's needs alone until 1741, when the vestry authorized construction of a framed barn "28 foot long and 18 foot wide shedded down each side," and a framed dairy that was the commonplace twelve feet square.<sup>60</sup> The barn probably provided the minister with shelter for his grain crops, farming tools, and--beneath the sheds--his cattle and horses. His wife, who still had to cook and serve meals in the same room the family used for living and sleeping, gained the convenience of a small detached space where she could handle and store foods such as milk and butter.

In 1746 the vestry allocated funds for the addition of a room to the glebe house, a decision that gave the minister and his family the opportunity to differentiate some of their household activities. It was not until 1747, eleven years after the glebe land was first occupied, that the vestry considered the construction of a detached 16-foot-square wood-framed kitchen worthwhile. The following year the minister acquired the means to cure and store his own pork in a newly built 12-foot-square log smokehouse. In 1751 the vestry

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<sup>60</sup> Vestry Book of Wicomico Parish, ff. 2, 24, 37-38, and 40.

directed that a large garden be securely fenced against foraging fowl and livestock. They also funded construction of a log stable that measured 16 feet square and contained racks, mangers, and stalls for four horses.<sup>61</sup>

Thus by 1752, the Wicomico Parish minister and family were ensconced in a two-room wood-framed dwelling with five attending outbuildings. Two years later, the vestry initiated their search for the resources and workmen necessary to build a new brick glebe house. When this masonry dwelling was completed, the minister and the vestry apparently considered the glebe's quality and quantity of structures adequate, for thereafter the only building projects authorized by the vestry involved replacement of, in turn, the barn, the garden pales, the kitchen, and the stable.<sup>62</sup>

The record of building projects undertaken by the vestry of Wicomico Parish in Northumberland County offers more than the surprising demonstration that a dairy might be considered more necessary than a kitchen. It also portrays a specific Northern Neck plantation during the middle decades of the eighteenth century. The domestic outbuildings were small one- and two-room structures that probably clustered about the minister's dwelling. The significantly larger barn may have been situated near the edge of the group, or it may have been located along the fenceline of a distant field.<sup>63</sup>

These structures were the architectural components of an almost unvaryingly wooden environment: the dwelling, kitchen, dairy, and barn were wood-framed and planked or weatherboarded. The smokehouse and stable were built of sawn logs. All of the structures had roofs covered with wood shingles or clapboards. The minister's house and kitchen were lathed and plastered on the

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<sup>61</sup> Vestry Book of Wicomico Parish, ff. 48, 50-51, and 56.

<sup>62</sup> Vestry Book of Wicomico Parish, ff. 61, 81, and 87.

<sup>63</sup> Anburey, Travels through the interior Parts, v. 2, p. 187.

interior--at least below stairs--but the other buildings had no inside finish. The only exterior protection was provided by the coats of tar that the vestry periodically paid workmen to swab on the roofs and walls. The structures always had variable appearances owing to their relative ages, but the raw yellow look of freshly sawn lumber probably soon gave way to the rickety, loose-jointed quality that prompted the vestry to direct that the glebe buildings be "tightened" or resheathed. Still, repairs and maintenance must have been desultory, for all of the buildings required replacement within fifteen or twenty years.<sup>64</sup>

The minister of Wicomico Parish could count himself, in economic terms, among the better-off planters of the Northern Neck.<sup>65</sup> Before these descriptions of the glebe improvements can serve an accurate depiction of the surrounding architectural landscape, the minister's unpretentious assemblage of tar-blackened structures must probably be reduced in size, number, and finish. Down the road or across the creek from the glebe were numerous landowners and tenants whose operations might well consist of "an extensive piece of fenced ground [with] nothing on it but a miserable dwelling made of logs or planks."<sup>66</sup> Scattered among them were quarters with only those facilities the owner considered "sufficient

<sup>64</sup> Vestry Book of Wicomico Parish, ff. 43-44, 48, 50-51, 54, 56, 66, 81, and 86-87. In 1744 Joseph Ball told his nephew that he was concerned about the condition of the buildings at his various Northern Neck plantations: "I would have tar bought, and all my houses that are worth it everywhere, tarr'd in time." Joseph Ball to Joseph Chinn, 18 March 1744, Joseph Ball Letterbook 1743-1780, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

<sup>65</sup> One reckoning of an Anglican parish minister's economic and social status in colonial Virginia appears in Rutman and Rutman, A Place in Time, p. 69.

<sup>66</sup> Roberts and Roberts, editors, Moreau de St. Mery, p. 69.

for an overseer and Negroes."<sup>67</sup>

The key, then, to understanding the look of eighteenth-century service and agricultural buildings is to recognize that the size and number of buildings varied dramatically among plantations, depending on the resources of the landowner. Moreover, the relative size and quality of buildings varied within one plantation group, depending on the planter's priorities. The same principle, applied in a slightly different way, is also true of eighteenth-century housing. The size and quality of dwellings varied across the countryside, depending on the means of the owners. Among the dwellings of a single plantation assemblage, there were also substantial distinctions, results of its owner's inclinations and its inhabitants's relative status. John Gordon illustrated this last point with unusual clarity in 1765 when he published the description of a Northern Neck plantation he hoped to sell (fig. 5).

The domestic focus of his Richmond County tract was "a very good brick dwelling-house two story high, 52 feet by 32."<sup>68</sup> Gordon carefully described the arrangement and dimensions of the first-story rooms, which included a hall, a dining room, a chamber, a study, and a large closet, all organized around a central passage. The second story was partitioned into four bed chambers. In all, the prospective buyer would have been contemplating 3328 square feet of space with nine separate rooms among which he and his family could dine, work, receive guests, and sleep. A cellar beneath the house and several detached outbuildings insured that almost all household service activities such as cooking and laundering could be performed elsewhere.

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<sup>67</sup> Chamberlayne advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 20 October 1768, p. 2, c. 3.

<sup>68</sup> This and subsequent passages concerning Gordon's Richmond County plantation are taken from Gordon advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Royle), 25 October 1765, p. 4, c. 2

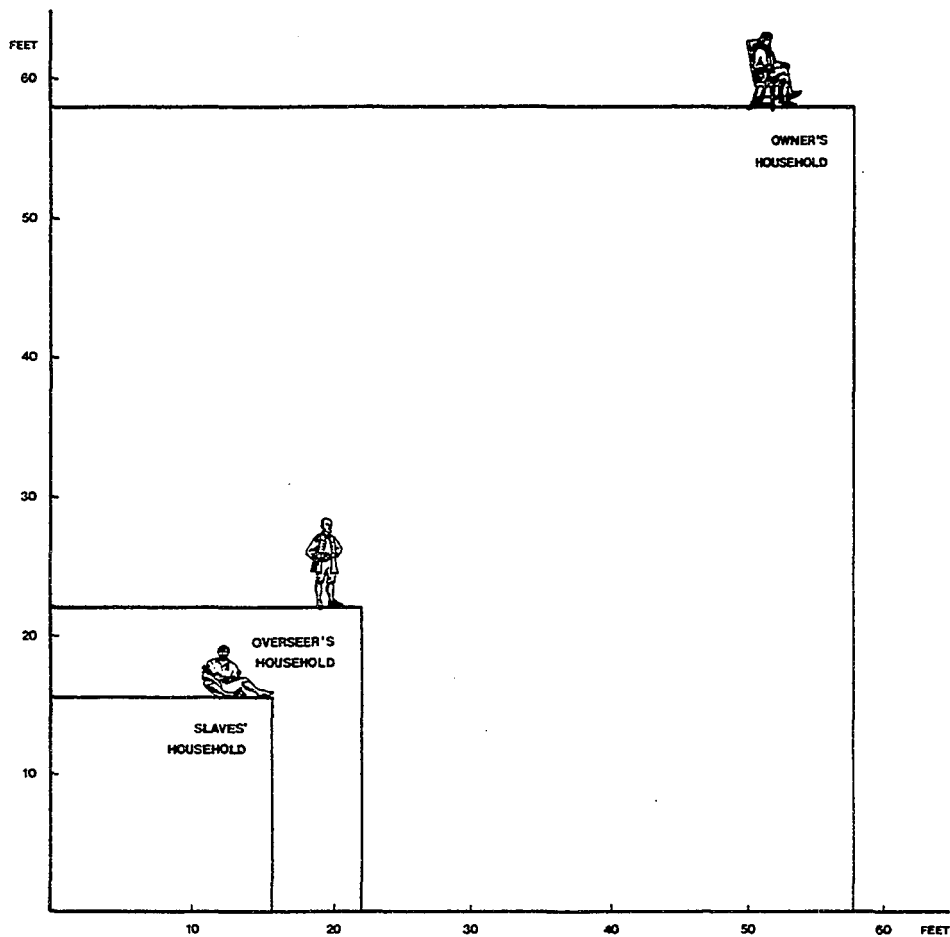


Fig. 5. Diagram of Living Space on the Gordon Plantation, Richmond County, Virginia. Based on Gordon Advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Royle), 25 October 1765, p. 4, c. 2. (Drawing, Camille Wells and Mark R. Wenger.)

Near this substantial brick house--but probably located at a respectful distance--was a wood-framed "overseer's house 10 by 24 feet, with three rooms below and one large one above." Thus, any candidate for the position of resident overseer of the surrounding plantation could count on no more than 480 square feet of housing. The three tiny rooms below stairs and the one undivided loft meant that he and his family could separate some of their household activities, but every necessary task had to be performed within the same four wood-covered walls, or outdoors. Gordon's advertisement makes it clear that the overseer's dwelling had no attendant service buildings. Indeed, the overseer's dwelling was itself a service building attendant to the planter's brick house. Furthermore, if the overseer's house had any appealing interior finish, or even a brick chimney, Gordon failed to mention it. That the overseer and his family must be resigned to a rough wooden shell, warming themselves and cooking at a mud- or plaster-covered wood chimney, is implied by the obvious care Gordon took to describe the assets of each building on the site. Such inferior accommodations for a hired manager were apparently not thought inappropriate--at least not by those with the authority to improve them. Joseph Ball once told his nephew, who managed Ball's several Northern Neck plantations, that he saw "no reason why I should keep a fine house with sash [glazed] windows for an overseer."<sup>69</sup>

John Gordon's description continued to include the structure that the prospective buyer's slaves could expect to inhabit: a log or wood-framed "quarter 30 by 16 feet, with two brick chimnies." The rectangular ground dimensions of this quarter were probably partitioned into two distinct and roughly square spaces for the use of two separate households. If the loft was floored, there were two

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<sup>69</sup> Joseph Ball to Joseph Chinn, 18 March 1744, Joseph Ball Letterbook 1743-1780.

upper rooms where two additional families made their homes.<sup>70</sup> From the total 960 square feet available, each slave family or group of housemates could hope to claim no more than 240 square feet. This is exactly half the amount of sheltered space available to the overseer and his kin, and it is but a small fraction of the space occupied by the planter and his family. In other words, the level of comfort, privacy, and spatial differentiation residents of this Richmond County property might enjoy--or endure--had everything to do with their position in the plantation community and, not incidentally, the color of their skin.

What passed for slave housing in eighteenth-century Virginia included a wide assortment of accommodations. Some slaves were forced to make themselves at home in the vacant corners of buildings designed for other purposes. Joseph Ball wrote in 1758 that some of the slaves at his Little Falls plantation "must ly in the tobacco house."<sup>71</sup> At Marmion in King George County, the unlit kitchen loft enclosed living space for two black households. By the middle of the century, however, most slaves apparently lived in small one- or two-room wooden structures that varied in size from a 7-by-8-foot example at one of Joseph Ball's quarters to John Gordon's comparatively spacious 30-by-16-foot structure.<sup>72</sup> The brick chimneys of Gordon's example suggest that it also represented the top of the line in terms of finish and state of repair. So did the

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<sup>70</sup> Upton, "White and Black Landscapes," pp. 59-63; Edward Chappell, "Slave Housing" Fresh Advances (November 1982), pp. i-ii, iv; John Michael Vlach, "Afro-American Domestic Artifacts in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Material Culture 19 (Spring 1987), pp. 3-23.

<sup>71</sup> Joseph Ball to Joseph Chinn, 7 October 1758, Joseph Ball Letterbook 1743-1780.

<sup>72</sup> Joseph Ball to Joseph Chinn, 19 February 1754, Joseph Ball Letterbook 1743-1780; Gordon advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Royle), 25 October 1765, p. 4, c. 2.



quarters available to some of the slaves at Joseph Ball's Forest plantation in Lancaster County: "well cover'd weatherboarded, and lath'd & filled," each with a "good plank door, with iron hinges & a good lock & key."<sup>73</sup> At the opposite end of the range of possibilities was the "miserable shell, a poor apology for a house" that an English traveler claimed to have shared one night in 1784 with six slaves and their overseer.

[It] was not lathed nor plastered, neither ceiled nor lofted above, and only very thin boards for its covering; it had a door in each side, and one window, but no glass in it; it had not even a brick chimney, and, as it stood on blocks about a foot above the ground, the hogs lay constantly under the floor, which made it swarm with fleas.<sup>74</sup>

Clearly, slave dwellings in eighteenth-century Virginia could be very humble. But the presence of the white overseer hints at another reality of this landscape. Slave housing was never vastly inferior in terms of size and finish to that occupied by most of the Chesapeake's common planters and landless laborers. They were all just colonial Virginians with few material resources--they were poor.<sup>75</sup>

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While written sources are always incomplete and often indirect,

<sup>73</sup> Joseph Ball to Joseph Chinn, 13 November 1746, Joseph Ball Letterbook 1743-1780.

<sup>74</sup> J. F. D. Smyth, A Tour in America (London: G. Robinson, 1784), v. 1, p. 75.

<sup>75</sup> Dell Upton has put it this way: "In many respects the physical characteristics of the quarters--small, flimsy, and sparsely furnished--merely reflected the slave's character as poor people in Virginia." Upton, "White and Black Landscapes," pp. 61-63.

it is still possible to understand more clearly the range of size and form characteristic of houses on the Northern Neck during the eighteenth century. A study of inventories taken for Lancaster County estates between 1680 and 1740 reveals that most of the decedents had lived in one- or two-room houses. Of all those whose goods were categorized according to the room in which they were found, between 28 and 29 percent had inhabited a single space. The same proportion of the deceased had divided their possessions and activities among two rooms. Only about 43 percent of the inventoried households contained as many as three rooms.<sup>76</sup>

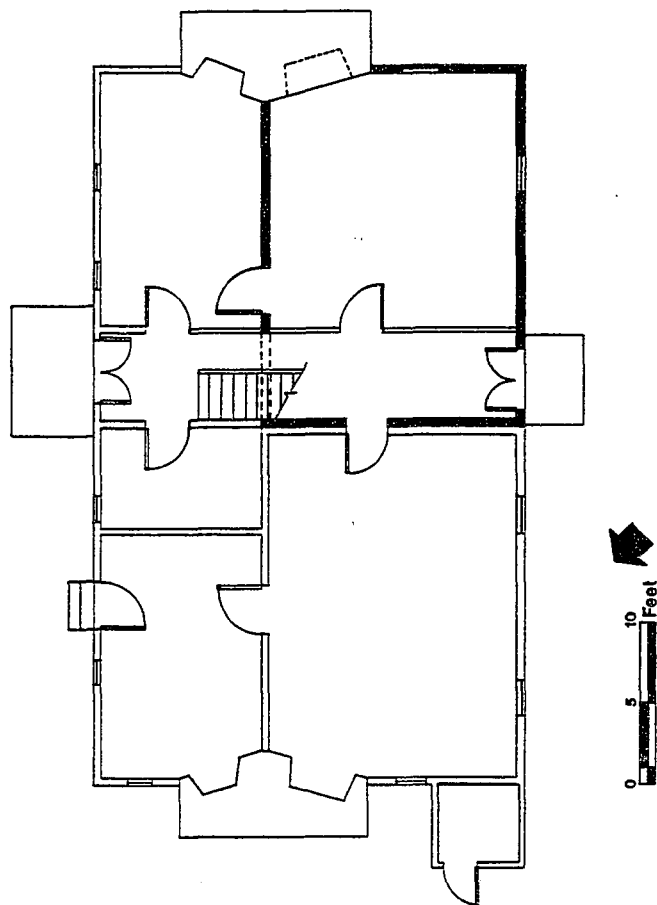
Eighteenth-century journals and letters suggest that there were plenty of poor Virginians living in shoddily constructed and carelessly finished one- and two-room dwellings. But evidence drawn from room-by-room inventories--colonial records dominated by the affluent--demonstrates that such small houses were also built and inhabited by those whose economic standing was quite enviable. As it presently exists, Linden Farm in Richmond County is the result of several periods of construction, but it was originally built--and stood for at least two generations--as a one-room dwelling (fig. 6). Constructed by the Dew family in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, Linden Farm was the seat of a three hundred-acre tract that the Dews owned and cultivated from the 1660s until 1780. Allowing quantities of acres to represent relative wealth, it is clear that the Dews and their one-room abode ranked comfortably among the top 20 percent of all households on the Northern Neck at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>77</sup>

If Northern Neck inventories are representative, eighteenth-

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<sup>76</sup> Carter L. Hudgins, "Patrician Culture, Public Ritual, and Political Authority in Virginia 1680-1740," (Ph. D. Dissertation: College of William and Mary, 1984), p. 206.

<sup>77</sup> Virginia Drewry McG. Pearson, "Linden Farm," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 33 (December 1983), p. 3828.



Linden Farm  
Richmond County, Virginia

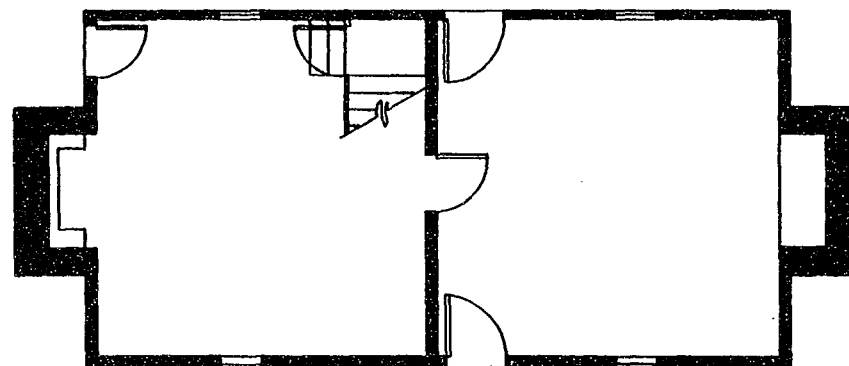
Fig. 6. Plan of Linden Farm, Richmond County, Virginia. (Drawing,  
Camille Wells.)

century Virginia planters built two-room structures about as frequently as they constructed one-room dwellings. This plain double-cell formula allowed inhabitants to partition their house into a busy, congested "outward" room and a smaller, more protected "inward" room, where a measure of quiet and privacy was possible. At Mount Zion in Northumberland County, Thomas Jones thought such a two-room formula quite appropriate for some one or several members of his plantation community.<sup>78</sup> This hardy framed and weatherboarded building is planned so that two rooms of equal size are placed side by side and bracketed by a pair of gable-end chimneys (fig. 7). About a mile to the northeast, William Claughton built his two-room dwelling with an outward room situated protectively in front of the smaller inward room (fig. 8). This arrangement permitted the two spaces to take heat from the same substantial brick chimney. Although it is likely that Linden Farm, the Claughton house, and perhaps even the Mount Zion tenement each originally had one or more detached service buildings, these small dwellings indicate that many eighteenth-century planters actively preferred to live in close quarters with others and to tolerate the carrying on of many different forms of domestic life within a few relatively undifferentiated spaces.

Well-off Virginians who chose to abide in one- or two-room

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<sup>78</sup> It is a longstanding tradition in Northumberland County that Jones built this structure for his children's Scottish tutor. See J. Motley Booker, "Mt. Zion and Its People," in Bulletin of the Northumberland County Historical Society 9 (1972), p. 4. In 1770 Jones did refer to the tutor's "house about three hundred yards from mine . . . with two rooms one his lodging room the other a school room." Jones stated, however, that the dimensions of this tutor's house were 24 feet square, while the surviving dwelling at Mount Zion measures 32 by 16 feet. Thomas Jones to Walter Jones, 10 March 1770, Jones Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

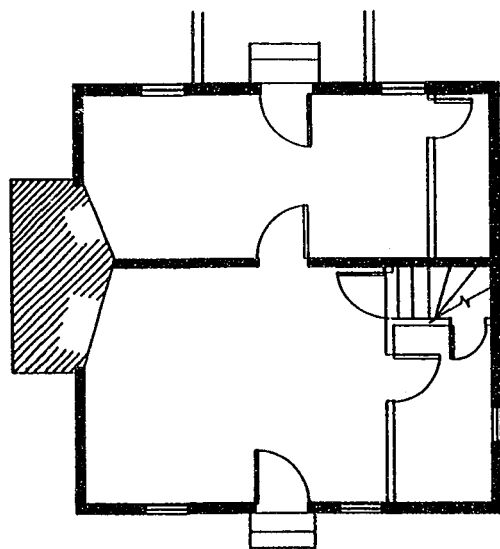


0 5 10 Feet



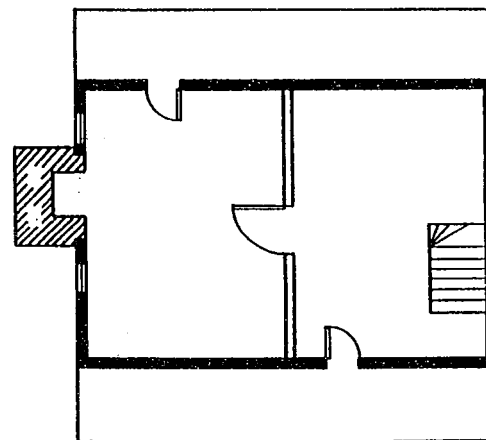
Mount Zion Tenement  
Northumberland County, Virginia

Fig. 7. Plan of Mount Zion Tenement, Northumberland County, Virginia. (Drawing, Camille Wells.)



First Floor Plan

1 5 10 Feet



Second Floor Plan

Fig. 8. Plan of the Claughton House, Northumberland County, Virginia.  
(Drawing, Camille Wells.)

dwelling might also decide to make them solid and even finely detailed. The Rochester house in Westmoreland County illustrates this possibility (fig. 9). This one-room structure is set on a substantial brick cellar, and its wooden frame is filled in with brick and clay nogging. The house is sheathed outside with sawn weatherboards, and the interior is sealed with plaster. Even the loft room, left open and rough in many dwellings, was originally finished with plaster and, like the principal room below, it has a fireplace. Tiled shoulders, a T-shaped stack, and regular glazed header bricks distinguish the brick chimney, and all of the wood trim was skillfully beaded or chamfered.<sup>79</sup> These details are signs that the Rochester house was put together with considerable concern for a neat, well-made appearance. They also reflect labor and expertise available only to the affluent few in early Virginia.

Structure is no less important than form in determining the character of eighteenth-century housing on the Northern Neck. If the solid fabric and appealing embellishment of the Rochester house stand for the care and expense that a builder invested in an apparently unpretentious dwelling, the structure's original board roof is a reminder that even for a planter of means, Virginia remained predominantly an environment shaped and sheltered by wood.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, Linden Farm's original coat of tar demonstrates the wide acceptance of seemingly inelegant but practical and available solutions to problems of conservation. As late as 1779 Thomas Anburey remarked that . . .

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<sup>79</sup> See the entry for the Rochester house in the catalog and Edward A. Chappell, "Architectural Recording and the Open-Air Museum: A View from the Field," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture II, Camille Wells, editor, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), pp. 30-31.

<sup>80</sup> For the early Virginia practice of covering roofs with clapboards or weatherboard, see Dell Upton, "Board Roofing in Tidewater Virginia," APT Bulletin 8 (1976), pp. 22-43.



Fig. 9. Rochester House, Westmoreland County, Virginia. (Photo, Edward A. Chappell, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.)



[Virginia] houses are most of them built of wood, the roof being covered with shingles, and not always lathed and plastered within, only those of the better sort that are finished in that manner, and painted on the outside; the chimnies are often of brick, but the generality of them are wood, coated on the inside with clay; the windows of the better sort are glazed, the rest have only wooden shutters.<sup>81</sup>

Anburey was a responsible observer, but he probably overlooked an important feature of the houses he saw. In addition to wooden chimneys, most of these structures had wooden foundations--of earthfast posts, sills, or blocks. Joseph Ball was more explicit. In 1746 his Lancaster County slave quarters were supported on "good substantial cills, of white oak or chestnut, laid a little way into the ground."<sup>82</sup> Impermanent construction techniques, like board roofs and coatings of tar, were not confined to the poorer sorts of housing on the Northern Neck. Across the Rappahannock River in Middlesex County, the minister of Christ Church Parish resided in a two-room post-in-the-ground glebe house until the vestry authorized construction of a brick replacement in 1750. Archaeological evidence strongly suggests that Millenbeck, the eighteenth-century Lancaster County house occupied by several affluent generations of William Balls, was built in part on hole-set posts.<sup>83</sup>

Earthfast posts were not the only vulnerable feature of colonial

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<sup>81</sup> Anburey, Travels through the Interior Parts, v. 2, p. 187

<sup>82</sup> Joseph Ball to Joseph Chinn, 13 November 1746, Joseph Ball Letterbook 1743-1780.

<sup>83</sup> Vestry Book of Christ Church, Middlesex County, pp. 129 and 263; Nina Tracy Mann, Millenbeck: An Archaeological Excavation of a Colonial Mansion (Lancaster, Virginia: Mary Ball Washington Museum, 1976), pp. 27, 30-31.

Virginia's wood-framed buildings. Between 1746 and 1748, the vestry of Wicomico Parish in Northumberland County initiated a major renovation of the existing glebe house. The original one-room framed structure received a one-room extension, and both sections of the house were freshly weatherboarded and covered with tar. Masons added a brick cellar "five feet below the surface of the earth, one brick and half thick," and a brick chimney to the structure. Carpenters installed glazed sash in the formerly wood-shuttered windows. These improvements should have substantially increased the permanence of the glebe house, but within six years, the vestry resolved to build an entirely new dwelling, announcing that they would fund no more repairs to the old one. In 1757 the new brick structure was ready for use, and the old wooden glebe house became just another of the several outbuildings scattered around the site. It survived in that role until 1768, when workmen dismantled it to provide lumber and bricks for a new glebe kitchen. In short, the wooden glebe house was regarded as habitable for no more than a decade after it received those ostensibly stabilizing features, a brick cellar and chimney. Within twenty years, the vestrymen considered it fit only as a source of building materials. Its record was thus no better than that of a comparable earthfast structure. Apparently, light frames and thin cladding could make even houses with masonry foundations insecure and shortlived.<sup>84</sup>

While surviving documents and buildings demonstrate that eighteenth-century Virginians recognized and even preferred buildings with a greater promise of permanence, disposable architecture was often the everyday reality for substantial as well as impoverished colonists. Why was this so? When the Wicomico glebe house was taken apart in 1768, Virginians had been watching buildings come and go in ten-to-twenty-year cycles for more than a

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<sup>84</sup> Vestry Book of Wicomico Parish, ff. 48, 50, 57, 64, and 87.

century and a half.<sup>85</sup> Over time, they may have come to assume that wooden buildings of almost any description and foundation were worth no more than twenty years of use. That this view had currency is hinted in the remark of a French traveler in Virginia: "It is commonly thought . . . that pine buildings seldom last more than ten years, and for this reason they are never repaired."<sup>86</sup>

It is also likely that temporary houses were just one component of a temporary landscape--a countryside shaped to meet only the immediate needs of those who inhabited it. Why might the landscape have such an impermanent character? Perhaps the grinding uncertainty of life in seventeenth-century Virginia had fostered habits and traditions that continued to manifest themselves in the way eighteenth-century Virginians thought about time, prosperity, and longevity. Perhaps the forces that had made life difficult for Virginia colonists of the previous century--unstable markets and unchecked fevers--had not really abated.<sup>87</sup> In any case, the results were the same, forcing one eighteenth-century German visitor to scribble a cautionary note in his account of travel through Virginia.

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<sup>85</sup> The estimate that an earthfast Virginia house could last no longer than twenty years appears in Carson, Barka, Kelso, Stone, and Upton, "Impermanent Architecture," p. 158.

<sup>86</sup> Roberts and Roberts, editors, Moreau de St. Mery, p. 47.

<sup>87</sup> In a convincing essay, Anita H. Rutman cites evidence that the tobacco market was not as frighteningly volatile during the seventeenth century as some scholars have suggested. Still, the price of tobacco did vary significantly from one year to the next, and this state of affairs persisted through the eighteenth century. Rutman also asserts that the life expectancy of eighteenth-century Virginia colonists was not substantially greater than it had been for their seventeenth-century ancestors. See Anita Rutman, "Still Planting the Seeds of Hope: The Recent Literature of the Early Chesapeake Region," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 95 (January 1987), pp. 3-24.

I believe that I ought to remark here that whoever would like to use my journal 10 years hence for information about inns or river crossings would be very much astonished to find neither the same inns nor the same ferries any more, because they have the bad practice of giving them the name of the momentary proprietors.<sup>88</sup>

In a landscape where ferries and ordinaries were known by the names of their current owners, where roads were poorly delineated and intersections unmarked, structures built to survive only a score of years were not out of place. They were, in fact, entirely appropriate to a countryside where most inhabitants emphasized daily or seasonal concerns at the expense of the past, the future, and the outside world.

By the end of the eighteenth century, better-off planters of the Northern Neck had no doubt discarded impermanent houses for more durable ones. But various forms of flimsy construction--earthfast and otherwise--remained familiar aspects of life for the majority. Thomas Jefferson confirmed that this was true even in the closing years of the century, after Virginia had become part of a new nation. He wrote "private buildings are very rarely constructed of stone or brick; much the greatest proportion being of scantling and boards, plaistered with lime. It is impossible to devise things more ugly, uncomfortable, and happily more perishable."<sup>89</sup> Indeed, as late as 1890, a Northumberland County boy could grow up in a two-room wood-framed house with a loft left unfinished until a schoolteacher came to board. Rambling about the woods and fields, he might glimpse, within sight of his grandfather's house, "a log cabin with a

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<sup>88</sup> Acomb, editor, Journal of Baron von Closen, p. 131.

<sup>89</sup> Thomas Jefferson, Notes on The State of Virginia, William Peden, editor, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), p. 152.

log chimney which sometimes took fire and had to be put out, a time of considerable excitement."<sup>90</sup>

This, then, is the original, the proper context for the surviving houses of the Northern Neck, those "[m]anors that were once the homes of America's founding families."<sup>91</sup> In an eighteenth-century landscape of rough and ready fences, tar-covered agricultural buildings, cramped and shoddy dwellings, these "manors" were extraordinary from the very beginning. The least pretentious among them was an exception to the chronic and persistent architectural impermanence. The most pretentious of them were outrageous claims on wealth, status, and durability that only a few could achieve. For most inhabitants--America's other founding families--the Northern Neck was a countryside of modest fortunes and middling prosperity, sliding down the scale toward relentless poverty and unending servitude. The shapes and contours of this countryside are sometimes difficult to visualize, for they were astonishingly harsh, distinctly foreign, and decidedly unlike most popular contemporary notions of the colonial past. But imagining this other world from the diverse bits of available evidence is fundamental to a responsible understanding of the surviving buildings. Beyond that is the opportunity to work through the fog of nostalgia toward a more accurate and worthwhile comprehension of the eighteenth-century landscape from which modern Virginia--and America--have descended.

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<sup>90</sup> Euodias Garrison Swann, "Along Life's Pathway," Bulletin of the Northumberland County Historical Society 10 (1973), pp. 55 and 68.

<sup>91</sup> "Northern Neck, Virginia: Tidewater Treasure," Colonial Homes 12 (November-December 1986), p. 49.

### CHAPTER 3: HOUSES AND OUTBUILDINGS--CONTEXTS AND PERCEPTIONS

It was probably after the harvest of 1767 that Virginia planter Dolphin Drew set about the task of selling the Isle of Wight County tract where he lived and worked. Undoubtedly, Drew told acquaintances and neighbors of his intentions, and he probably posted announcements at the county courthouse in Smithfield and at nearby Newport Parish church.<sup>1</sup> Most planters with property for sale found these forms of communication sufficient, but Drew also decided to advertise his plantation in the Virginia Gazette. While he may not have swallowed the claim that any notice published in colonial Virginia's only newspaper would "be read by some thousands of people," Drew nevertheless thought the Gazette an effective means of expanding his pool of potential buyers.<sup>2</sup> By 1768, Williamsburg was the origin of two competing editions of the Gazette, so Drew sent copies of his composition to William Rind's printing shop as well as to the office run jointly by Alexander Purdie and John Dixon (table 1).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dolphin Drew to Robert Tyne, 6 July 1769, Isle of Wight County Deed Book R, pp. 281-284. This deed indicates that the advertised plantation was in Newport Parish and that it was the place "whereon the said Dolphin Drew now lives."

<sup>2</sup> This claim about the Gazette's field of circulation was printed in one of the first issues of the newspaper. Virginia Gazette (Parks), 8 October 1736, p. 4, c. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Drew advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 11 February 1768, p. 3, c. 2; Drew advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 25 February 1768, p. 2, c. 3. Both printers continued to list

TABLE 1  
PRINTERS AND VERSIONS OF THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE  
ARRANGED BY YEARS IN BUSINESS

<u>FIRST VERSION</u>	<u>SECOND VERSION</u>	<u>THIRD VERSION</u>
William Parks: 1736-1750		
William Hunter I: 1751-1761		
Joseph Royle: 1761-1765		
Alexander Purdie: 1765-1766		
Alexander Purdie and John Dixon: 1766-1775	William Rind: 1766-1773 Clementina Rind: 1773-1774	
John Dixon and William Hunter II: 1775-1778	John Pinkney: 1774-1776	Alexander Purdie: 1775-1779
John Dixon and Thomas Nicolson: 1779-1780		John Clarkson and Augustine Davis: 1779-1780

The Virginia Gazette was colonial Virginia's only newspaper. A comprehensive index for all three versions, published in 1950, established the custom of identifying each issue of the newspaper not by its series but by its printer. While the terms of the printers suggest that newspaper publication in Williamsburg was continuous from 1736 through 1780, every series of the Gazette is marked by gaps. Missing issues are sometimes the result of uneven survival rates, but others clearly represent lapses in publication. The majority of known Gazettes dates from the period between 1765 and 1779. This material is drawn from Lester J. Cappon and Stella F. Duff, editors, Virginia Gazette Index 1736-1780 (Williamsburg: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1950), v. 2, p. vi.

As a frequent reader of the Gazette, Dolphin Drew had seen land announced for sale in brief, uninflected advertisements that offered interested readers little in terms of particulars. He also had seen long notices with garrulous descriptions, and this sort better suited his goals. Thus he composed an announcement full of details concerning the attractive qualities of his house and its outbuildings, his cultivated land and its riverside site (fig. 1). Focused as he was on the hope of selling his property for an agreeable price, Drew scarcely imagined this newspaper entry might someday be virtually all that remained of his extensive and expensively improved Tidewater plantation.

Dolphin Drew's advertisement is much more than the incidental description of a Virginia site that rejoined the elements long ago. Printers of the eighteenth-century Gazette encouraged readers like Drew to hire newspaper space for public notices. Indeed, throughout its forty-four years of publication, nearly half of the Gazette's usual four-page format was devoted to advertisements for all sorts of services and property lost, found, wanted to purchase, or available for sale.<sup>4</sup> Drew's notice is one of 838 advertisements for real the notice through March. Like most other entries published concurrently in competing editions of the Gazette, Drew's advertisements have identical texts. This, in addition to the emphatically first-person voice of the announcements, is grounds for the assumption that the signers of advertisements were also their authors.

<sup>4</sup> The earliest known issue of the Virginia Gazette appeared on 11 September 1736, and publication was more or less continuous until early in 1780. Beginning in 1766, there were two and sometimes three rival versions of the newspaper concurrently in circulation. Public notices "of a moderate length" cost three shillings for the first week and two shillings for each week thereafter. While subscription rates varied over the years, this fee for advertisements remained consistent among all editions of the paper from 1736 until after the Revolution. Lester J. Cappon and



**To be SOLD by the Subscriber,**  
**A VALUABLE TRACT of LAND**  
 in ISLE of WIGHT county, containing by estimation 750 acres; whereon is a dwelling-house of brick, 40 by 30 feet, with a passage, and four rooms on a floor, a new kitchen underpinned with brick, with a brick chimney and gable end, two Negro quarters, two good barns, the one 52 by 24, and the other 40 by 20 feet, a good stable, and sundry other out-houses. — Also eleven hundred bearing apple trees of the choicest fruits, a great number of peach, and a variety of other fruit trees, such as apricots, plumbs, and cherries, of the most approved kinds. The situation of the place is very beautiful, from an extensive prospect, on *James* river, and convenient to church, mills, &c. The land is well timbered, and part thereof very good; the soil being well adapted to the cultivation of tobacco, corn and other grain, particularly wheat, of which it produces exceeding fine, without manure.

**CREDIT** will be allowed for half the purchase money, till *April* 1769; and for the other half till the *April* then next following. — For further particulars, enquire of  
**DOLPHIN DREW.**

Fig. 1. Dolphin Drew Advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 11 February 1768, p. 3, c. 2. (Virginia Historical Society and Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.)

property printed among all surviving issues and versions of this colonial newspaper (table 2).

As a set, the Virginia Gazette entries are rich with information concerning the appearance and organization of the early Virginia countryside.<sup>5</sup> Planters discussed their dwellings, domestic service buildings, and agricultural structures with more frequency and consistency in advertisements of land for sale than in any other documentary source. Gazette notices also permit glimpses of those natural and cultivated aspects of the eighteenth-century plantation-fences and rivers, meadows and gardens--that once formed the skeleton and tissue of the rural Virginia landscape. Furthermore, since planters often listed more than one tract or lot in a single notice, these documents represent the characteristics and improvements of 1019 distinct parcels of land in eastern Virginia (fig. 2).

Promising as they are, eighteenth-century Gazette advertisements can be misleading little documents. Notices of property for sale appeared in the newspapers by no more systematic

Stella F. Duff, editors, Virginia Gazette Index 1736-1780 (Williamsburg: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1950), v. 1, pp. v-ix; Paul P. Hoffman, editor, Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Virginia Gazette Daybooks 1750-1752 and 1764-1766 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Library Microfilm Publications, 1967), pp. 5-10.

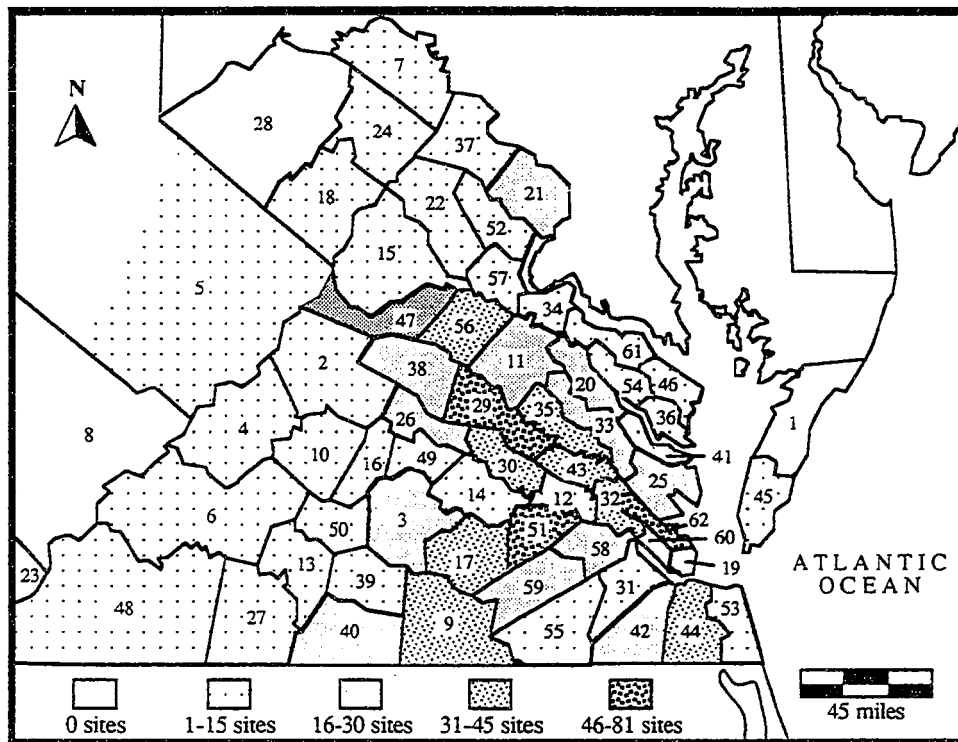
<sup>5</sup> Every surviving advertisement of land for sale, lease, or rent has been transcribed and assigned the date and reference of its first appearance in the newspaper. Subsequent or duplicate appearances of a tract or lot have been recorded, but each piece of property has been counted--its contents sorted and analyzed--only once. Excluded from this collection of documents are Gazette advertisements for land in neighboring colonies, as well as notices that contain absolutely no descriptive material. The result is a comprehensive assemblage of 722 tracts and 297 lots--or 1019 parcels--described in 838 advertisements.

TABLE 2  
 PROPERTIES ADVERTISED FOR SALE IN THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE  
 RANKED BY DECADE

<u>YEAR PRINTED</u>	<u>NUMBER OF PROPERTIES</u>	<u>PERCENT OF TOTAL</u>	<u>CUMULATIVE PERCENT</u>
1736-1739	35	3.4	3.4
1740-1749	34	3.3	6.8
1750-1759	136	13.4	20.1
1760-1769	273	26.8	46.9
1770-1779	524	51.4	98.3
1780	17	1.7	100.0
TOTALS	1019	100.0	100.0

The total of 1019 Virginia sites were advertised in 838 known Virginia Gazette notices.

FIG. 2. DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTIES ADVERTISED FOR SALE IN THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE



Virginia Counties in 1775

1. Accomack (0 sites)	17. Dinwiddie (31)	32. James City (38)	48. Pittsylvania (5)
2. Albemarle (12)	18. Dunmore (1)	33. King and Queen (19)	49. Powhatan (1)
3. Amelia (16)	19. Elizabeth City (25)	34. King George (6)	50. Prince Edward (11)
4. Amherst (11)	20. Essex (16)	35. King William (38)	51. Prince George (51)
5. Augusta (4)	21. Fairfax (23)	36. Lancaster (10)	52. Prince William (5)
6. Bedford (8)	22. Fauquier (2)	37. Loudon (2)	53. Princess Anne (10)
7. Berkeley (4)	23. Fincastle (0)	38. Louisa (18)	54. Richmond (7)
8. Botetourt (0)	24. Frederick (3)	39. Lunenburg (11)	55. Southampton (6)
9. Brunswick (37)	25. Gloucester (30)	40. Mecklenburg (16)	56. Spotsylvania (43)
10. Buckingham (10)	26. Goochland (21)	41. Middlesex (4)	57. Stafford (8)
11. Caroline (25)	27. Halifax (10)	42. Nansemond (16)	58. Surry (27)
12. Charles City (14)	28. Hampshire (0)	43. New Kent (32)	59. Sussex (22)
13. Charlotte (9)	29. Hanover (81)	44. Norfolk (38)	60. Warwick (7)
14. Chesterfield (14)	30. Henrico (41)	45. Northampton (1)	61. Westmoreland (12)
15. Culpeper (13)	31. Isle of Wight (14)	46. Northumberland (7)	62. York (48)
16. Cumberland (11)		47. Orange (6)	

Of the 1019 advertised properties, 8 appeared with no mention of their location. Properties astride two counties are tallied in the first-named county. (Drawing, Turk McCleskey.)

device than an individual planter's inclination, and most of the land that changed hands in Virginia between 1736 and 1780 did so without help from printed announcements of any kind. Written almost entirely by members of the colony's literate elite, Gazette notices also tend to represent plantations of the exceptionally well-to-do. Land distribution in early Virginia varied by decade and locality, but throughout the eighteenth century, most landed planters owned relatively small parcels.<sup>6</sup> During the early 1780s, about 63 percent of the landowners who lived among the Tidewater counties of Virginia's Northern Neck paid taxes on less than two hundred acres. Those who owned seven hundred acres or more constituted as little as 8 percent of this peninsula's landholding population (table 3). By contrast, only 12 percent of the Gazette-advertised tracts encompassed under two hundred acres. Well over half of the parcels offered for sale were four hundred acres or larger, and 30 percent of them were at least as extensive as the 750-acre plantation that brought Dolphin Drew the handsome price of £1100 (table 4).<sup>7</sup>

The Gazette notices are slippery documents for other reasons as well. Writing with a specific goal in mind, planters selectively emphasized the more salable elements of their tracts. Some advertisers structured their discussions so that their properties appeared comparable to other advertised sites. Because planters assumed that most Gazette readers shared a general familiarity with the eastern Virginia countryside, they often relied on conventionalized phrases like "and sundry other outhouses" or "and

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<sup>6</sup> Robert and Katherine Brown are among those scholars whose work with eighteenth-century tax lists and quitrent rolls confirms that most landed planters in eastern Virginia owned no more than two hundred acres. Robert E. Brown and B. Katherine Brown, Virginia 1705-1786: Democracy or Aristocracy? (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964), pp. 17-31.

<sup>7</sup> Drew to Tyne, Isle of Wight County Record Book R, p. 281.

**TABLE 3**  
**LANDOWNERS ON THE NORTHERN NECK OF VIRGINIA IN 1782**  
**RANKED BY ACREAGE**

<u>ACRES</u> <u>OWNED</u>	<u>NUMBER OF</u> <u>LANDOWNERS</u>	<u>PERCENT</u> <u>OF TOTAL</u>	<u>CUMULATIVE</u> <u>PERCENT</u>
1-49	128	8.2	8.2
50-99	331	21.3	29.5
100-199	521	33.4	62.9
200-299	239	15.3	78.2
300-399	97	6.2	84.5
400-499	50	3.2	87.7
500-599	45	2.9	90.6
600-699	30	1.9	92.5
700-799	18	1.2	93.7
800-899	10	0.6	94.3
900-999	12	0.8	95.1
1000-1500	39	2.5	97.6
1500-2000	18	1.2	98.7
2000+	20	1.3	100.0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1558</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

There were 2699 taxable households in Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties in 1782, but 1141 of them owned no land at all. Material for this table is drawn from the 1782 Land Tax Records for Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

TABLE 4  
 PROPERTIES ADVERTISED FOR SALE IN THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE  
 RANKED BY ACREAGE

<u>ACRES LISTED</u>	<u>NUMBER OF SITES</u>	<u>PERCENT OF TOTAL</u>	<u>CUMULATIVE PERCENT</u>
1-49	3	0.5	0.5
50-99	16	2.4	2.9
100-199	63	9.5	12.3
200-299	94	14.2	26.5
300-399	70	10.5	37.0
400-499	97	14.6	51.7
500-599	64	9.6	61.2
600-699	53	8.0	69.3
700-799	30	4.5	73.8
800-899	35	5.3	79.1
900-999	15	2.2	81.3
1000-1499	64	9.6	90.9
1500-1999	19	2.9	93.8
2000-2999	24	3.6	97.4
3000-3999	10	1.5	98.9
4000-6000	5	0.8	99.7
12,000-12,100	2	0.3	100.0
TOTALS	664	100.0	

Planters supplied acreage for 664 of 722 advertised tracts. The median tract contained 453 acres. The total number of sites described in the Gazette is 1019, but 297 of these are lots that encompassed something less than an acre.

all other conveniences" to keep their notices moderate in length and expense.<sup>8</sup> Even the most detailed newspaper descriptions contain lapses and summaries in which significant components of the eighteenth-century landscape are obscured from view.

Despite these shortcomings, Gazette advertisements of property for sale offer the best available depictions of early Virginia houses and outbuildings in the context of their rural landscapes. Most of the structures and features they mention have long since vanished. Many aspects of this eighteenth-century countryside appear only occasionally or tangentially in other sources. Some of the details that Dolphin Drew and his fellow advertisers troubled to specify remain discernible to modern eyes only in contours of the terrain or stains in the soil. The newspaper entries also have the authority of their numbers. Sorted, counted, and scrutinized for their omissions as well as their points of emphasis, the Gazette advertisements constitute a source of information about the landscape of early Virginia that is more integrated, copious, and revealing than any other.

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Of the many sorts of buildings represented in the Gazette, "dwelling houses" are the most numerous--there are 919 houses among the 1019 parcels of advertised land. They are also the most fully discussed. In phrases devoted to exterior ground dimensions, principal building materials, and organization of interior space, advertisers not only told Gazette readers the size and solidity of the dwellings they hoped to sell, they also indicated what was typical and what was exceptional for the domestic architecture of early Virginia.

Because the planters who wrote newspaper notices were more

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<sup>8</sup> Of the total 1019 property descriptions, 610--or 59.9 percent--contain summary phrases of this sort.



affluent than most Virginians, it is no surprise that many advertised houses are called "commodious" and "genteel." Such praise may suggest that Gazette readers were all buying and selling two-story double-pile structures like Belle Isle, the "elegant new brick house" on a Lancaster County plantation that was offered for sale in 1778. (fig. 3).<sup>9</sup> Belle Isle is certainly not unique among the pages of the Gazette, but only 121 of the 919 advertised dwellings are said to have the substantial proportions, the quantity and arrangement of rooms, the "elegantly papered" walls, or "well finished and wainscotted" interiors customarily associated with the housing of Virginia's colonial elite.<sup>10</sup>

Far more numerous are dwellings distinguished by "well planked" rooms or "three sashes [glazed windows] below stairs and three above" that conform to the descriptions of travelers through early Virginia.<sup>11</sup> To Edward Kimber, who made his trip in 1746, an assemblage of Chesapeake houses had "much the aspect of a country fair, the generality of the houses differing very little from booths."<sup>12</sup> Thomas Anburey wrote in 1779 that Virginia houses were "not always lathed or plastered within, only those of the better

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<sup>9</sup> Griffin advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie), 10 July 1778, p. 2, c. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Randolph advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 8 October 1767, p. 2, c. 1; Burwell advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 15 May 1771, p. 3, c. 1. The figure 121 represents 13.2 percent of the 919 advertised houses. It is the sum of those thirty-five houses that enclosed at least nine hundred square feet and those eighty-six houses with four or more first-floor rooms.

<sup>11</sup> Unsigned advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Parks), 26 November 1736, p. 4, c. 2; Smithson advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Hunter), 13 February 1752, p. 4, c. 1.

<sup>12</sup> "Observations in Several Voyages and Travels in America," William and Mary Quarterly 1st Series, 15 (January 1907), p. 153.

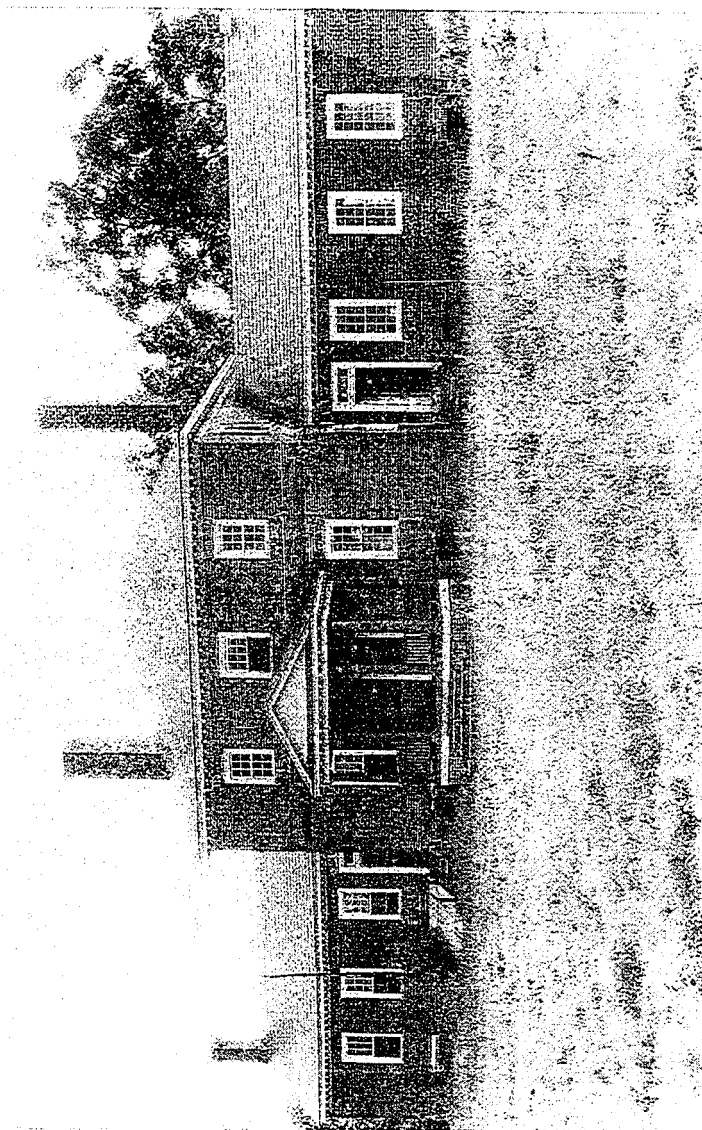


Fig. 3. Belle Isle, Lancaster County, Virginia, about 1937. (Virginia State Library and Archives.)

sort that are finished in that manner, and painted on the outside;...the windows of the better sort are glazed, the rest have only wooden shutters."<sup>13</sup>

Descriptive phrasing of this sort suggests that Gazette-advertised houses, like most Virginia dwellings, were relatively humble in finish. Specifics concerning plans suggest that they were also rather small. Of the 273 dwellings for which advertisers discussed interior partitions, 36 percent had one- or two-room plans (table 5).<sup>14</sup> In this respect, they may have resembled the Claughton house in Northumberland County. This eighteenth-century dwelling was further subdivided in the nineteenth century, but it originally enclosed two rooms on the main floor, while a third room occupied the entire loft above stairs (fig. 4).<sup>15</sup> William Claughton built this dwelling during the 1780s on a 422-acre tract that would have ranked near the median of Gazette-advertised properties, but among the top 15 percent of all landholdings on the Northern

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas Anburey, Travels through the Interior Parts of America (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1923), vol. 2, p. 187.

<sup>14</sup> This number was achieved by adding the ninety-one dwellings with first-floor or total rooms counts equal to one or two to those eight houses with total room counts equal to three or four. The resulting ninety-nine dwellings represents 36 percent of the total 273 dwellings for which planters enumerated rooms. If it were possible to discover room counts for the 646 other Gazette-advertised houses, this figure would probably increase dramatically. Scholars have used other primary sources to argue that most early Virginia dwellings enclosed only one principal room. Orlando Ridout V, "Re-Editing the Past: A Comparison of Surviving Documentary and Physical Evidence," paper presented in New Haven at the annual conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, April 22, 1982; Dell Upton, "The Origins of Chesapeake Architecture," Three Centuries of Maryland Architecture (Annapolis: Maryland Historical Trust, 1982), pp. 44-57. For more on the probable prevalence of one- and two-room houses, see Chapter 2.

<sup>15</sup> For plans of the Claughton house, see Chapter 2.



Fig. 4. Claughton House, Northumberland County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)

TABLE 5  
HOUSES ADVERTISED FOR SALE IN THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE  
DISTRIBUTED BY NUMBER OF ROOMS

<u>ROOMS ON THE FIRST FLOOR</u>	<u>NUMBER OF HOUSES</u>	<u>PERCENT OF TOTAL</u>
1	1	0.4
2	85	31.0
3	53	19.4
4	90	33.0
5	12	4.4
6	2	0.7
7	1	0.4
8	1	0.4
 <u>ROOMS IN THE ENTIRE HOUSE</u>		
2	5	1.8
3	1	0.4
4	7	2.6
5	4	1.5
6	5	1.8
7	2	0.7
8	2	0.7
9	1	0.4
10	0	0.0
11	1	0.4
TOTALS	273	100.0

Planters specified the number of first-floor rooms for 245 advertised houses, and they supplied a total count of rooms for twenty-eight additional dwellings.

Neck.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Claughton was a very successful planter who supplemented the income from his crops with profits from a blacksmith shop operated by his own slaves. He also enjoyed exceptional standing as an officer in the local militia and as a representative for his episcopal parish.<sup>17</sup> Although the Claughton house is sturdily built and carefully finished, its modest size and uncomplicated form hardly seem adequate for the household of a prosperous and privileged Virginia planter. While it is but one example, the Claughton house supports the Gazette advertisements in their indication that most eighteenth-century Virginians--even those who were quite affluent--dwelt in structures that appear astonishingly small and plain.

Specifications of exterior measurements press the matter further. Of the 169 houses for which advertisers noted ground dimensions, fewer than 8 percent could match or exceed the 1280 square feet that Belle Isle contains within its 140-foot length and 32-foot width (table 6). Over half of the dimensioned houses contained areas of between 120 and 576 square feet on the main floor. With characteristic lengths and widths that ranged from as little as 10 by 12 feet to a relatively capacious 32 by 18 feet, these eighty-eight structures were no larger than the Claughton house, which encloses 576 square feet within a plan that measures about 24 feet square.

Basic contours of plan are the characteristics that most often appear in the Gazette, but forty-seven planters noted that the

<sup>16</sup> Northumberland County Land Tax Records, 1786, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>17</sup> Inventory of William Claughton Estate, 12 October 1808, Northumberland County Record Book 19, p. 266-69. Claughton represented St. Stephen's Parish at the Episcopal Convention of 1797. William Meade, Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1857), vol. 2, p. 131.

TABLE 6  
HOUSES ADVERTISED FOR SALE IN THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE  
DISTRIBUTED BY SQUARE FEET

<u>SQUARE FEET</u>	<u>COMMONEST DIMENSIONS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF HOUSES</u>	<u>PERCENT OF TOTAL</u>	<u>CUMULATIVE PERCENT</u>
120-144	12 x 12	6	3.6	3.6
192-240	16 x 12	6	3.6	7.1
256	16 x 16	7	4.1	11.2
320	20 x 16	16	9.5	20.7
360-384	24 x 16	15	8.9	29.6
400-480	28 x 16	16	9.5	39.1
512-560	32 x 16	11	6.5	45.6
576	32 x 18	11	6.5	52.1
620-640	32 x 20	7	4.1	56.2
648-684	28 x 24	10	5.9	62.1
720-784	40 x 18	14	8.3	70.4
800-880	40 x 20	11	6.5	76.9
896-990	32 x 28	12	7.0	84.0
1000-1200	32 x 32	9	5.3	89.6
1208-1216	40 x 32	5	3.0	92.3
1400-1408	70 x 20	4	2.4	94.7
1500-3168	56 x 32	9	5.3	100.0
TOTALS		169	100.0	100.0

Planters specified length and width for 169 of all advertised houses. The most frequently mentioned dimensions, twenty feet by sixteen feet, enclosed an area of 320 square feet.

houses they offered for sale were two stories tall. Because they belong to a set of documents in which the enumeration of stories was rarely mentioned, these occasional references to dwelling height suggest that silences in the newspaper descriptions are as important as specifications. By emphasizing the multiple stories of their own houses, the forty-seven planters tacitly revealed that 872 of the Gazette-advertised houses were not so tall.<sup>18</sup> They were, as most early Virginians would have expected, only one story high. Many advertisers indirectly confirmed this prevalence when they described dwellings with rooms, windows, and fireplaces "above stairs" that were fewer or smaller than those below.<sup>19</sup>

Planters also mentioned construction material for 114 of the advertised dwellings. Because eighty-five of these were built of

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<sup>18</sup> This drawing of inferences from omissions in the Gazette advertisements is based on the way scholars of language analyze the words people choose to designate and modify things. Linking an adjective with a noun that appears frequently in a text without modification marks that particular instance as somehow different from other occurrences. Mary Beaudry is one scholar who has used this reasoning to discern the commonplace and exceptional characteristics of a set of artifacts--in her case, ceramic vessels of the early Chesapeake. In the estate inventories that compose her texts, a container described--or marked--as "large" is identified as noticeably bigger than similar undifferentiated containers in the same assemblage. Mary C. Beaudry, "Words for Things: Linguistic Analysis of Probate Inventories," Documentary Archaeology in the New World, Mary C. Beaudry, editor, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 43-50; Joseph Greenberg, Language Universals (The Hague: Mouton, 1966).

<sup>19</sup> Paul E. Buchanan, "The Eighteenth-Century Frame Houses of Tidewater Virginia," Building Early America: Contributions toward the History of a Great Industry, Charles E. Peterson, editor, (Radnor: Chilton Book Company, 1976), pp. 54-73; Dell Upton, "Traditional Timber Framing," Material Culture of the Wooden Age, Brooke Hindle, editor, (Tarrytown: Sleepy Hollow Press, 1981), pp. 35-93.



brick or stone while only twenty-nine were made of wood, it at first appears that 75 percent of Virginia's eighteenth-century houses were masonry structures (fig. 5). This evidence is readily supported by the majority of surviving colonial houses, but the resulting impression of a rural landscape dotted with cozy little brick dwellings is challenged by those eighteenth-century visitors and residents who generalized about the character of housing in Virginia.<sup>20</sup> Thomas Anburey wrote that Virginia houses were "most of them built of wood."<sup>21</sup> George Washington remarked in 1791 that the dwellings of Virginia's Southside were "altogether of wood and chiefly of logs."<sup>22</sup>

Observations like these support a modern reading between the lines of eighteenth-century advertisements in the Gazette. If the early Virginia countryside was indeed dominated by houses built of wood, then newspaper references to masonry prevail because brick and stone were exceptional materials that advertisers emphasized whenever they could. By contrast, framed, plank, and log structures were so commonplace that their constitution hardly invited comment. This was certainly true for William Bernard and Thomas

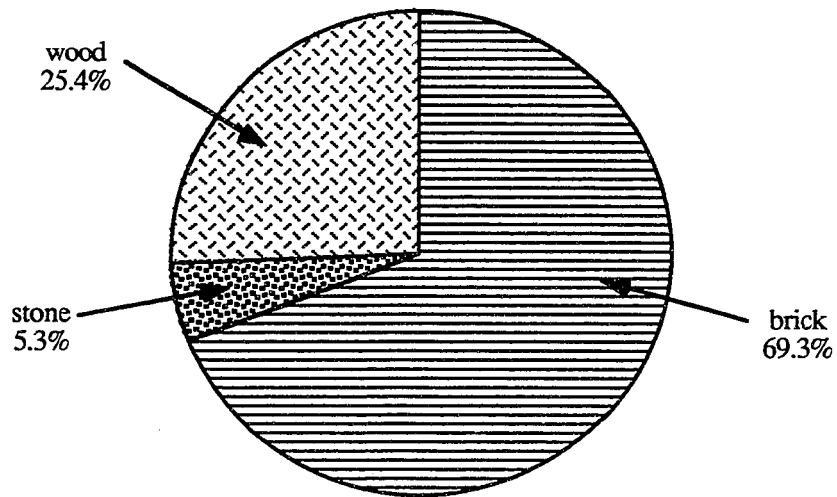
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<sup>20</sup> Orlando Ridout has used the 1798 Federal Direct Tax for Maryland to demonstrate that brick and stone houses are overrepresented among those that survive from the eighteenth century--presumably because masonry is more resistant than wood to fire and weather. In Queen Anne's County, 75 percent of all surviving eighteenth-century houses are built of brick, although framed and log dwellings accounted for between 75 and 97 percent of the county's housing stock at the end of the eighteenth century. This Maryland evidence must serve the entire Chesapeake, for Virginia's corresponding tax list has been lost. Orlando Ridout V, "Re-Editing the Past."

<sup>21</sup> Anburey, Travels through Interior Parts, v. 2, p. 187.

<sup>22</sup> John C. Fitzpatrick, editor, The Diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1925), v. 4, p. 195.

FIG. 5. HOUSES ADVERTISED IN THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE  
SORTED BY EXPLICITLY NAMED CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS.



Of the 114 houses for which planters mentioned construction materials, 79 were built of brick, six were built of stone, and 29 had wooden structures and cladding.

Jett, who in 1769 announced their intention to sell Twiford, an eighteenth-century dwelling that still overlooks the Rappahannock River in Westmoreland County (fig. 6). Bernard and Jett praised Twiford as a "very genteel and commodious dwelling-house, 56 by 32, with four brick chimnies and a good cellar," but they did not bother to mention its wood-framed structure or weatherboard cladding.<sup>23</sup>

This lapse of Bernard's and Jett's apparently caused no confusion, for most Gazette readers were sufficiently familiar with the conventions of eastern Virginia architecture to know that dwellings said to have brick foundations or brick chimneys were dwellings built of wood. When Twiford and the other 250 houses for which advertisers specified masonry cellars, underpinnings, or chimneys are counted among those for which planters identified wood as the principal construction material, wooden dwellings increase from 25 to nearly 77 percent of all advertised houses (fig. 7). Gazette descriptions like that for Twiford may further suggest that houses made of logs, planks, and wood-clad frames were so prevalent in eighteenth-century Virginia that planters recognized any unmodified use of "dwelling house" as designating a wooden structure. When those 554 houses for which advertisers entirely neglected the matter of fabric are added to those explicitly or indirectly identified as wooden, then the proportion of Gazette-advertised dwellings made of wood swells to over 90 percent of the total (fig. 8).

These key emphases and omissions in the Gazette notices imply that the majority of advertised houses were not only built of wood, they had wooden chimneys and footings as well. Dwellings with such features rarely survive, but eighteenth-century documents

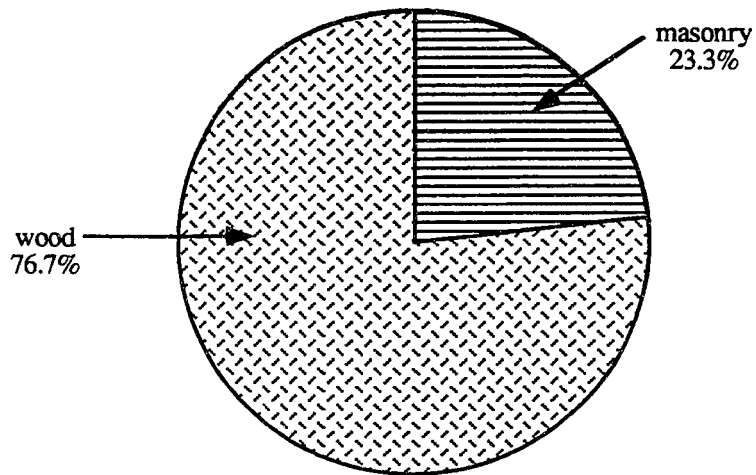
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<sup>23</sup> Bernard and Jett advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 6 July 1769, p. 4, c. 1.



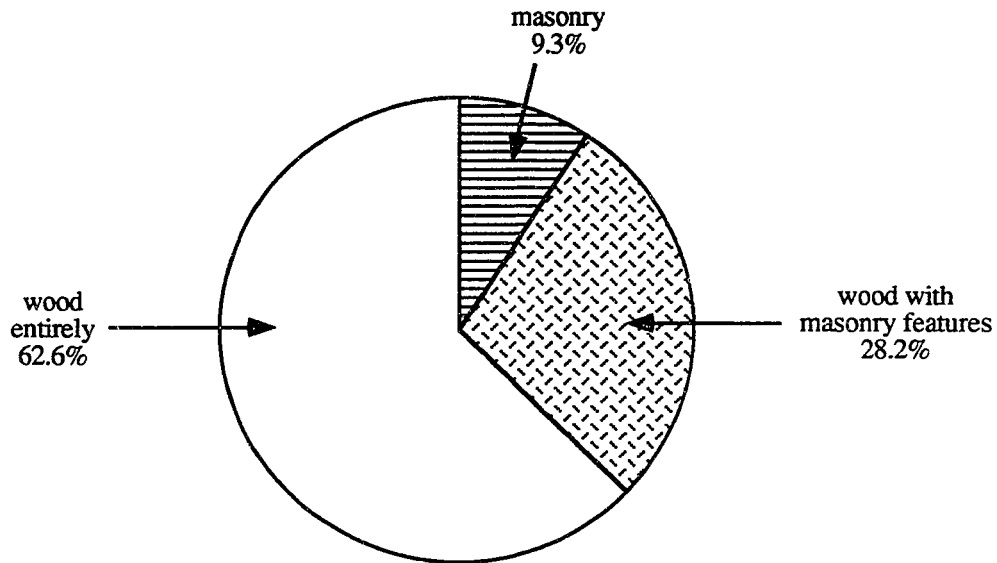
Fig. 6. Twiford, Westmoreland County, Virginia, about 1930.  
(Virginia State Library and Archives.)

FIG. 7. HOUSES ADVERTISED IN THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE  
SORTED TO INCLUDE IMPLIED CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS.



Of the 365 advertised houses for which planters specified or implied principal materials of construction, 85 were built of brick or stone. The remaining 280 houses include 29 that planters identified as made of wood and 251 houses for which planters mentioned masonry chimneys or underpinnings.

FIG. 8. HOUSES ADVERTISED IN THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE  
SORTED TO INCLUDE ASSUMED CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS.



Of all 919 advertised houses, 85 were made of brick or stone. There were also 259 houses built of wood with masonry features. Of this total, 79 houses (8.6%) stood on masonry cellars or foundations, 106 houses (11.5%) had at least one brick or stone chimney, and 66 houses (7.2%) had both masonry underpinnings and chimneys. The 575 houses classified as made entirely of wood include the 21 dwellings for which planters mentioned wooden structure or cladding unenhanced by masonry features as well as those 554 dwellings advertised with no reference to construction material.

indicate that they were once common aspects of Virginia's domestic architecture. Making his way through the Tidewater in 1732, William Hugh Grove learned that travelers should ride past the many dwellings with framed or log chimneys (fig. 9). He was more assured of finding the "spare bed and lodging and welcome" he sought at houses where "brick chimbles shew."<sup>24</sup> Visitors like Grove also remarked that Chesapeake houses were often founded on wooden sills, blocks, or earthfast posts (fig. 10). In 1746, Edward Kimber described an Eastern Shore community where "the church and all the houses are built of wood, but [only] some of them have brick stacks of chimneys: some have their foundations in the ground, others are built on puncheons or logs, a foot or two from the earth."<sup>25</sup>

Gazette notices corroborate this story. References to masonry chimneys and foundations--like those for Twiford--occur with sufficient frequency to indicate that Virginians could not take these substantial elements for granted. Added to the eighty-five houses built entirely of brick or stone, wooden dwellings with some combination of masonry cellars, footings, or chimneys represent about 36 percent of all advertised dwellings. The remaining 583 house descriptions are pointedly silent concerning those materials with which the dwellings in question were supported or supplied with heat. Thus it appears that the majority of Gazette advertisers could not differentiate the houses they hoped to sell from those entirely wooden structures that dominated the early Virginia landscape.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Gregory A. Stiverson and Patrick H. Butler III, editors, "Virginia in 1732: The Travel Journal of William Hugh Grove," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 85 (January 1977), p. 30.

<sup>25</sup> "Observations in Several Voyages," p. 153.

<sup>26</sup> The colonial Virginia custom of building houses on posts set in the ground is the subject of two important essays. Both suggest that earthfast or "impermanent" housing was prevalent only in the



Fig. 9. Dwelling with a Wooden Chimney, James City County, Virginia, about 1930. (Susan Higginson Nash Collection, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.)



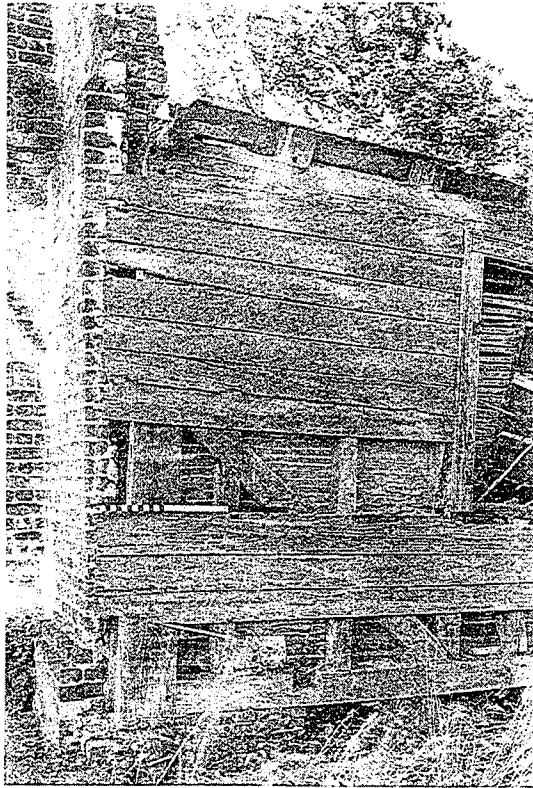


Fig. 10. Detail of Formerly Earthfast Post and Interrupted Sill at Towles Point, Lancaster County, Virginia, 1940. (Photo, C. O. Greene, Historic American Building Survey, Library of Congress.)

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While planters often treated dwellings to numerous descriptive phrases, their notations concerning outbuildings are often quite stingy with details. Most advertisers did no more than list the various service and agricultural structures with which their tract was improved, and some merely wrote that their property included "outhouses proper" for a rural dwelling site. Yet these auxiliary buildings were crucial to life in early Virginia. By accommodating fundamental domestic chores such as cooking and washing, outbuildings made Virginia households complete. By sheltering the tools, tasks, and fruits of colonial agriculture, outbuildings made Virginia plantations work.

Like Gazette advertisements, early Virginia probate inventories were not created as records of eighteenth-century buildings, yet both sorts of documents frequently contain information about the form and extent of Virginia dwellings. Inventories are no more likely than newspaper notices to include descriptions--or even references--to outbuildings, but the presence of these structures is discernible in their comprehensive lists of domestic goods and plantation implements. An inventory like that for Peter Cox's estate can indicate what sorts of structures came to mind when Virginians

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seventeenth century. Cary Carson, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, and Dell Upton, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," Winterthur Portfolio 16 (Summer/Autumn 1981), pp. 135-196, reprinted in Robert Blair St. George, editor, Material Life in America, 1600-1860 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp. 113-158. Fraser D. Neiman, "Domestic Architecture at the Cliffs Plantation: The Social Context of Early Virginia Building," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 28 (December 1978), pp. 3096-3128, reprinted in Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, editors, Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), pp. 292-314 .

read of a plantation improved with "all convenient outbuildings."

During his youth, Peter Cox assembled, through inheritance and purchase, 461 acres of land in Northumberland County. Property of this extent placed him among the most advantaged 8 percent of all Northern Neck householders.<sup>27</sup> In 1777, Cox built for himself and his wife a wood-framed dwelling that measured about 24 feet square (fig. 11).<sup>28</sup> Upon his death fifteen years later, the neighbors who appraised his estate revealed the plan of his small dwelling by listing its contents according to the rooms where they were found. Two rooms with fireplaces--the hall and chamber--shared the main story with an unheated "little room." A third fireplace served the single room upstairs.<sup>29</sup>

When they stepped from Cox's house into the yard and beyond, the appraisers abandoned room-by-room classification, but in the character and sequence of "plantation utensils &c. &c." they chronicled their progress through and around several other structures.<sup>30</sup> A quantity of pots, kettles, spits, forks, and skillets equipped a detached kitchen. The stoneware jug and earthen jars probably performed their duties in a separate dairy. Most of Cox's eighty-eight hogs roamed freely about his fallow fields and woodlands, but the thirty-six swine that his appraisers found "fatted" were surely confined in a yard to await their destiny as pork parts suspended in a smokehouse. The five hives of bees were out in the open, but Cox probably kept his seventeen cider casks and

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<sup>27</sup> J. Motley Booker and James F. Lewis, "Cox's Old Place Now Yeocomico View Farm in Cherry Point," Bulletin of the Northumberland County Historical Society 21 (1984), pp. 43-53.

<sup>28</sup> The year of construction is derived from a chimney brick inscribed "PC 1777" that the property owner salvaged when he pulled the Cox house down.

<sup>29</sup> Inventory of Peter Cox Estate, 8 December 1792, Northumberland County Record Book 14, p. 680-683.

<sup>30</sup> Cox Inventory, pp. 680-683.

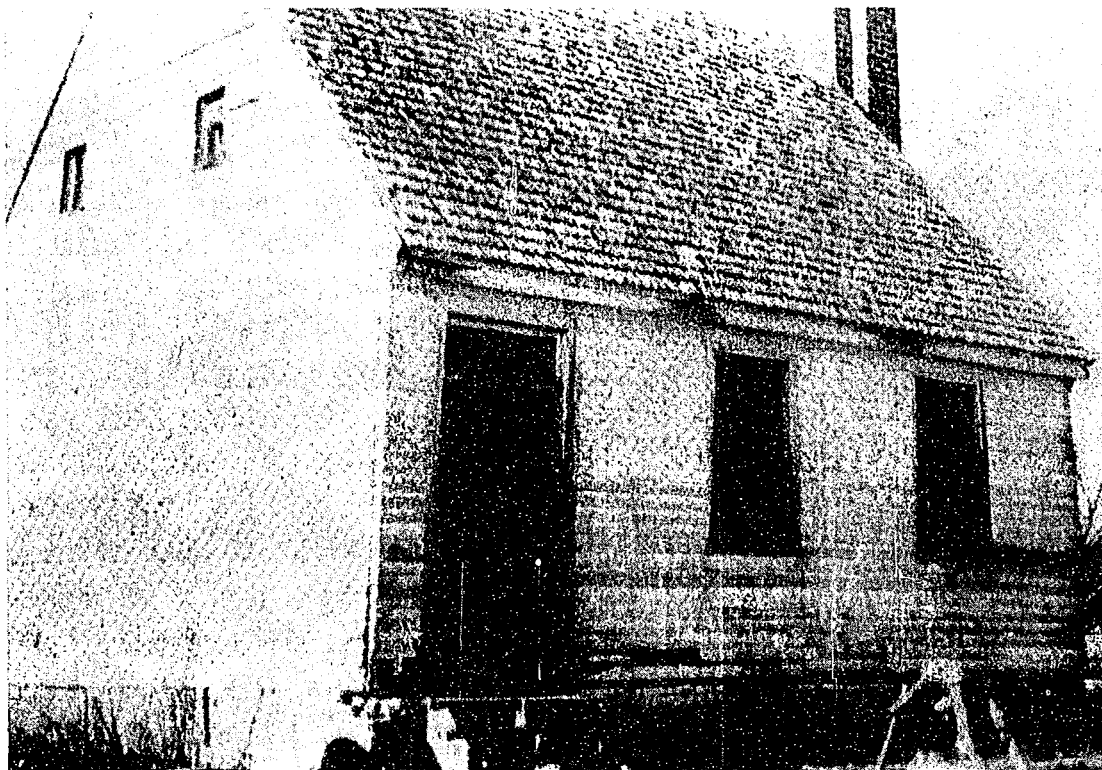


Fig. 11. Cox House, Northumberland County, Virginia, about 1940.  
(Northumberland County Historical Society.)

his still, tub, worm, and trough in a structure called the "still house" or "cider house." Cox may have seen no need to keep his boat and sail or his cart and old riding chair out of the weather, but the valuable results of his agricultural year--the 165 barrels of corn and the 7626 pounds of tobacco--were undoubtedly sheltered in corn cribs and tobacco houses.

Using his twelve axes, fifteen hoes, and five ploughs, Cox's twenty-six slaves supplied most of the labor that kept his plantation productive. These people constituted the most valuable component of Cox's estate, and they were so numerous that Cox probably found it impractical to house them all among the spare lofts, sheds, and corners of his other plantation buildings.<sup>31</sup> Thus Cox's architectural resources almost certainly included a slave quarter. This designation would have sufficed both for a single slave dwelling and for a cluster of several slave houses. Cox also might have organized a portion of his less accessible acreage into a separate "quarter plantation" whereon some of his slaves dwelt and worked under the supervision of a hired overseer.<sup>32</sup>

Inventories like that of Peter's Cox's worldly possessions impart substance to the brisk lists and glancing notations of outbuildings in the Gazette. They also suggest how indispensable were these service and agricultural buildings to the domestic comfort and economic success of Virginia plantations. Furthermore, inventories help to explain the prevalence of dwellings with only one

<sup>31</sup> Collectively valued at £839, Peter Cox's slaves represented 48 percent of his personal estate. Cox Inventory, pp. 680-683.

<sup>32</sup> Discussions of slave housing in early Virginia include Edward A. Chappell, "Slave Housing," Fresh Advices (November 1982), pp. i-iv and Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Places: A Quarterly Journal of Environmental Design 2 (Winter 1985), pp. 59-72, reprinted in St. George, editor, Material Life in America, pp. 357-370.

or two main rooms--even for those Virginians who might have afforded more space. Like Peter Cox, affluent planters expected to distribute many of their household goods and chores among nearby dependencies.

In this respect--as architectural attendants to a planter's dwelling--outbuildings were as significant to Virginia's social landscape as they were to its domestic and economic vitality. Across a countryside of plantation dwellings that were small, wooden, and distinguished, if at all, by brick chimneys or glazed windows, service and agricultural structures helped to make tangible the local hierarchies of wealth and status. The quantity, size, and solidity of attendant outbuildings offered an architectural index to each planter's means--the diversity of his activities and the scope of his influence.

Gazette-advertised plantations on which dwellings were characterized as "tolerable" or "suitable for tenants" often had no outbuildings at all.<sup>33</sup> In 1779, Bernard Todd offered to sell the Hanover County tract that he had rented to Thomas Priddy. The land was partly cleared and planted in corn, but Todd cautioned: "a clapboard dwelling-house 24 by 16 is the only improvement."<sup>34</sup> Poor planters and tenants like Priddy got along as best they could without dependencies. They performed all necessary cooking, washing, and food preservation in their dwellings or in adjacent yards. When their modest crops of tobacco or grain required shelter, light and temporary sheds or barracks must have sufficed. Sites like these provoked Moreau de St. Mery's remark that in Virginia "many of

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<sup>33</sup> Watkins advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 23 March 1769, p. 3, c. 1; Wiley advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 29 April 1773, p. 2, c. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Todd advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Dixon and Nicolson), 11 December 1779, p. 3, c. 1.

the houses are wretched and frequently an extensive piece of fenced ground will have nothing on it but a miserable dwelling made of logs or planks."<sup>35</sup>

Overseers who supervised gangs of field slaves on the quarter plantations of wealthy Virginians lived much like Thomas Priddy and his sort. Many of the sixty-one overseer's houses mentioned in the Gazette are characterized disparagingly as "rough" or "fit for the reception of an overseer."<sup>36</sup> Only two of these dwellings were supplemented by smokehouses and dairies, and none had a detached kitchen. Where overseers sometimes differed from other ordinary Virginians was in their access to shelter for laborers and crops. Advertisers were more likely to specify slave dwellings for their quarter plantations than for their resident or tenanted tracts.<sup>37</sup> They also mentioned frequently that their quarter tracts were improved with tobacco houses, barns, granaries, and corn cribs.<sup>38</sup>

Indications are that most of these agricultural structures were both larger and better built than the house of any quarter resident--black or white. At Robert Carter's Colespoint quarter in Westmoreland County, the domestic complex included an overseer's dwelling worth £3, a dairy worth £2 and an "old kitchen" worth £1. There were also eleven "Negro cabins" valued at £2 each. By

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<sup>35</sup> Kenneth Roberts and Anna M. Roberts, editors, Moreau de St. Mery's American Journey 1793-1798, (New York: Doubleday, 1947), p. 69.

<sup>36</sup> Clark advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie), 21 August 1778, p. 3, c. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Advertisers specified slave housing for forty-seven, or 56 percent, of the eighty-three quarter plantations. By contrast, they mentioned slave housing for only eighty-five, or 13 percent, of the remaining 639 advertised tracts.

<sup>38</sup> Among the eighty-three advertised quarter plantations are listed seventy-five tobacco houses, thirty-five barns, twenty-one granaries, and eleven corn cribs.

contrast, the agricultural buildings--a barn, a granary, and a storehouse--collectively were worth £87.<sup>39</sup> Carter's architectural valuation of Colespoint suggests that Virginians recognized in Gazette phrases such as "houses proper for a quarter" a distinctive juxtaposition of small and shabby housing for overseers and slaves with substantial and capacious shelter for the crops they made.<sup>40</sup>

At the opposite extreme were the dwelling plantations of wealthy Virginians like William Jordan whose Richmond County plantation was advertised for sale after his death in 1765. Jordan had lived in a two-story brick house with a central passage and four rooms on each floor. Several of his first-story rooms were wainscotted, and "the whole [was] neatly finished." Surrounding Jordan's house were twelve auxiliary structures, including two made of brick--a kitchen and a store. His warehouse, meat house, dairy, coach house, stable, cow house, corn houses, quarter, and overseer's house were all constructed of wood.<sup>41</sup> William Jordan was an exceptionally wealthy planter whose interests were as much commercial as agricultural. He also enjoyed political standing as a county magistrate.<sup>42</sup> Eighteenth-century Virginians who scanned the Richmond County countryside could surmise his status from the big masonry house he had built, but they could also perceive his

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<sup>39</sup> Account of Colespoint Plantation, Second Book of Miscellanies, 1787-1790, Robert Carter Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

<sup>40</sup> Purdie advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 18 July 1766, p. 3, c. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Gordon advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Royle), 25 October 1765, p. 4 c. 2; Inventory of William Jordan Estate, undated, Richmond County Will Book 6, pp. 102-103; John Morton Jordan to John Gordon, 7 June 1762, Richmond County Deed Book 12, p. 373.

<sup>42</sup> "Journal of the Council of Virginia in Executive Sessions 1737-1763," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 14 (July 1906), p. 32.



wealth and influence in the diverse assemblage of outbuildings that imparted to Jordan's dwelling its air of superior detachment.<sup>43</sup>

While the number and character of outbuildings varied dramatically among the plantations of eastern Virginia, 60 percent of the Gazette-advertised dwellings kept company with at least one and as many as five auxiliary structures.<sup>44</sup> With 334 appearances among the newspaper notices, kitchens were by far the most frequently mentioned and most fully described of these outbuildings. Unlike dwellings, which differed widely in terms of size and form, kitchens were almost always one-or two-room buildings (fig. 12).<sup>45</sup> Some kitchens were as big as the dwellings they attended. John Ellis's Hanover County plantation had "a very good dwellinghouse with two rooms, a kitchen of the same size." On Duncan Rose's plantation near Petersburg was "a new dwelling-house 32 feet by 18, neatly finished" with "a new kitchen and laundry 36 feet by 18."<sup>46</sup> Rose's kitchen was larger than average. Most of the advertised kitchens had plans that enclosed between 192 and 384

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<sup>43</sup> Dell Upton first remarked on the impression conveyed when wealthy Virginians surrounded their substantial mansions numerous smaller and plainer outbuildings. Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Winterthur Portfolio 17 (Summer/Autumn 1982), p. 102. This essay was reprinted in Upton and Vlach, editors, Common Places, pp. 315-335.

<sup>44</sup> These figures underrepresent the importance of outbuildings to early Virginia dwelling sites, for they do not include the 161 houses offered for sale with no mention of specific outbuildings but with some version of the summarizing phrase "and all useful outbuildings."

<sup>45</sup> Advertisers supplied room numbers--never totaling more than two on a floor--for thirteen of the 334 kitchens.

<sup>46</sup> Rose advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 10 March 1774, p. 3, c. 2; Ellis advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Dixon and Nicolson), 31 July 1779, p. 3, c. 2.

square feet (table 7). Even planters who resided in substantial and genteel mansions usually dined on meals prepared in unpretentious kitchens with capacities no greater than these.

With 136 and 135 Gazette appearances, dairies and smokehouses were the next most common domestic outbuildings. Advertisers rarely labored over their descriptions of these useful little buildings, although they sometimes noted lengths and widths. Dimensioned dairies and smokehouses, like most surviving examples, were square in plan and enclosed between 64 and 256 square feet (figs. 13 and 14).<sup>47</sup> Planters occasionally mentioned features that specialized dairies and smokehouses for their tasks of food preparation and storage. Smokehouses were double studded to help secure their contents of cured meat, while dairies might be paved with the stones or bricks to improve their capacity for keeping perishable food cool.<sup>48</sup>

Gazette advertisers sometimes noted that their domestic outbuildings enclosed space where slaves might live. Thomas Craig described "a large and strong smokehouse, at one of end of it a place for people to sleep in." William Claiborne advertised a two-room structure with a kitchen and a laundry below stairs and a "room above the extent of the house, for servants lodgings."<sup>49</sup> While slaves often populated the incidental space within and between dependencies such as these, separate dwellings for slaves were common components of the Virginia landscape. Planters mentioned

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<sup>47</sup> Planters noted ground dimensions for eight dairies and smokehouses.

<sup>48</sup> Gordon advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Royle), 25 October 1765, p. 4, c. 2; Currie advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Hunter), 3 July 1752, p. 3, c. 2.

<sup>49</sup> Craig advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 30 August 1770, p. 3, c. 2; Claiborne advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie), 1 August 1777, p. 4, c. 1.

TABLE 7  
KITCHENS ADVERTISED FOR SALE IN THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE  
DISTRIBUTED BY SQUARE FEET

<u>SQUARE FEET</u>	<u>SPECIFIED DIMENSIONS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF KITCHENS</u>	<u>PERCENT OF TOTAL</u>	<u>CUMULATIVE PERCENT</u>
144	12 x 12	1	3.0	3.0
192	12 x 16	5	15.2	18.2
256	16 x 16	4	12.1	30.3
320	20 x 16	4	12.1	42.4
384	24 x 16	6	18.2	60.6
384	32 x 12	1	3.0	63.6
396	22 x 18	1	3.0	66.7
400	20 x 20	2	6.1	72.7
432	24 x 18	1	3.0	75.8
448	28 x 16	1	3.0	78.8
512	32 x 16	2	6.1	84.9
560	28 x 20	1	3.0	87.9
648	36 x 18	1	3.0	90.9
660	30 x 22	1	3.0	93.9
800	40 x 20	1	3.0	97.0
1024	32 x 32	1	3.0	100.0
TOTALS		33	99.8	100.0

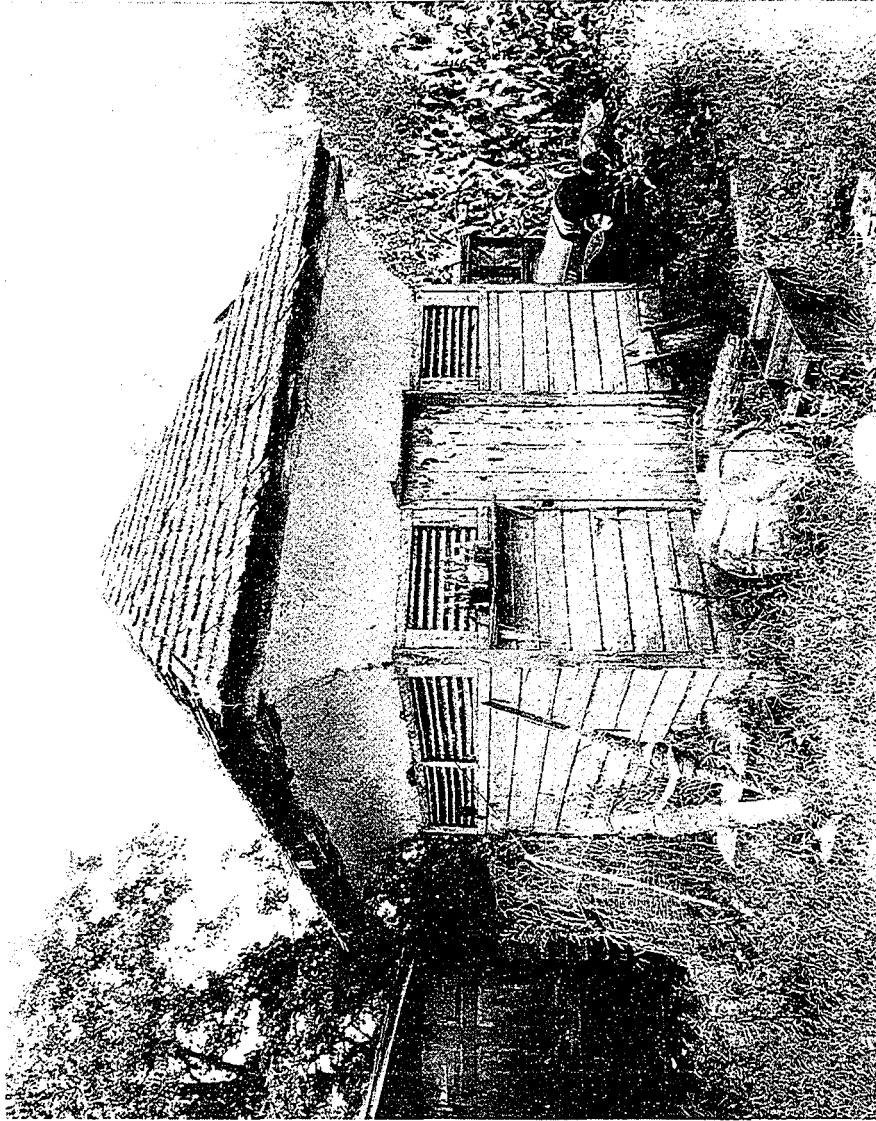


Fig. 13. Archibald Blair Dairy, Williamsburg, Virginia, about 1928.  
(Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.)

"negro quarters" for 134 of all advertised sites. Thirty-seven of these, like the "framed quarter with a brick fireplace" on Alexander Love's Norfolk County plantation, were clearly individual buildings. For twenty-seven other advertisers, the quarter was a cluster of dwellings like the "several outhouses for the reception of Negroes," that stood on Joseph Morton's James City County tract.<sup>50</sup> The remaining seventy planters who mentioned their "Negro quarter" neglected to note whether they were designating an individual structure or an assemblage of small buildings.

Advertised measurements for slave houses range from 12 by 8 feet to 40 by 20 feet, but the average quarter enclosed about 345 square feet. Slave dwellings of this capacity rank with the lowest 21 percent of the housing planters built for themselves. While no advertiser bothered to describe the plan of a quarter, common ratios of length to width suggest that most of these structures contained one or two rooms (fig. 15). Third and even fourth rooms were possible in slave dwellings with floored lofts.

Quarters were not only smaller than the dwellings of white Virginians, they were also more crowded as well. Built with "two brick chimneys and covered with cypress shingles," the quarter on Christopher Wright's Princess Anne County plantation was more substantial--and perhaps larger--than most. Still, it promised little in the way of domestic comfort for the twenty hands who worked Wright's freshly cleared and fenced ground.<sup>51</sup> John Gordon's tract was improved with a slave dwelling that measured "30 by 16 feet, with two brick chimneys." Although this structure was as spacious as almost 40 percent of all Gazette-advertised housing, it

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<sup>50</sup> Love advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Dixon and Hunter), 26 September 1777, p. 3, c. 1; Morton advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 5 April 1770, p. 4, c. 2.

<sup>51</sup> Wright advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie), 9 May 1777, supplement, p. 1, c. 1.

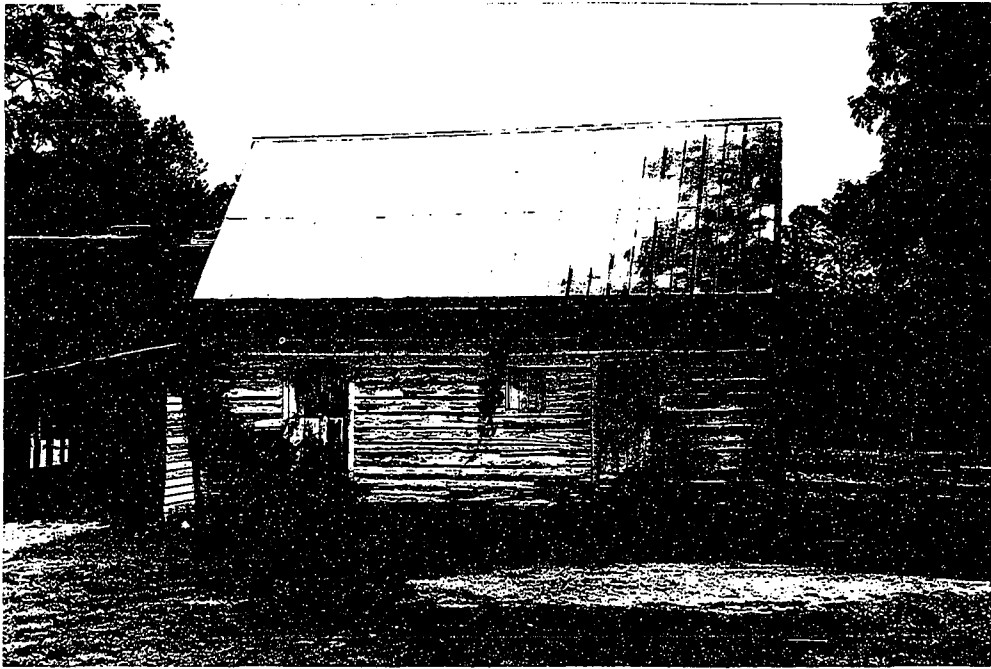


Fig. 15. Pruden Slave Dwelling, Isle of Wight County, Virginia.  
(Photo, Edward A. Chappell, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.)

was the only quarter on a plantation where the enslaved men, women, and children numbered twenty-eight.<sup>52</sup>

Barns are the agricultural buildings most likely to appear in Gazette notices--there are 232 cases. The forty structures for which planters provided dimensions ranged widely in size from 320 to 1360 square feet, but they were most commonly forty feet long and twenty feet wide (fig. 16).<sup>53</sup> Only a few subscribers lingered over the attractions of their barns. In 1767, James Mercer sought a renter for his Loudon County tract which had "a double-pitched framed barn, with three floors for storing threshed grain." Joseph Clarkson wrote in 1776 that his Dinwiddie County plantation had "a barn 68 by 20, with threshing-floors."<sup>54</sup> Most barns were large enough to make themselves useful in several ways, but descriptions like these suggest that the most widely recognized purpose of barns involved the storage of fodder and small grain crops.

Among the Gazette notices are 181 references to tobacco houses--the structures in which Virginia's principal crop was dried and packed for market. Tobacco houses were fundamental to agricultural life in the colony and they probably are not the most numerous of all advertised buildings because their presence was presumed for those tracts which planters characterized as good for tobacco or cleared and ready for planting. Advertisers mentioned tobacco as an established or potential crop for 158 plantations, and they described another 145 tracts as "convenient for planting" or with "all necessary houses for cropping."<sup>55</sup> The thirty dimensioned

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<sup>52</sup> Gordon advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Royle), 25 October 1765, p. 4, c. 2; Jordan Inventory, pp. 102-103.

<sup>53</sup> Of the forty dimensioned barns, sixteen--20 percent--measured 40 by 20 feet.

<sup>54</sup> Mercer advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 3 September 1767, p. 2, c. 3; Clarkson advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Dixon and Hunter), 13 December 1776, p. 3, c. 1.



Fig. 16. Windsor Castle Barn, Isle of Wight County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.)



tobacco houses varied in size from 448 to 1440 square feet, although most of them enclosed 800 square feet. Advertiser John Howard regarded a tobacco house of this capacity as "middle sized."<sup>56</sup> Because their most common measurements were forty feet by twenty feet, tobacco houses probably resembled barns. Rather than the threshing floors and lofts that barns required, tobacco houses often had "double tiers" of tie beams to carry the stakes that impaled the stems of harvested tobacco leaves.<sup>57</sup>

Like tobacco houses, granaries of various sorts are probably no more frequently specified in Gazette advertisements because their presence was implied for plantations "in good order for farming" and those advertised with grains "now in crop."<sup>58</sup> Planters recommended a total of 188 tracts with phrases such as these. Among the 113 Gazette references to shelters for grain are thirty-eight granaries, twenty-two corn cribs, fifty-two corn houses, and a single wheat house. On some plantations, barns apparently took the place of buildings specifically constructed for the storage of corn and wheat. In other cases, planters resorted to the spare lofts or dry corners of other plantation buildings when they needed a place for their harvested grain. Landon Carter noted in the winter of 1770 that his employee "[Richard] McGinnis is boarding up the partition in

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<sup>55</sup> Beale advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 31 October 1771, p. 4, c. 1; Bland advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 11 June 1772, p. 3, c. 2.

<sup>56</sup> Howard advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 21 January 1768, p. 4, c. 1; Howard advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 17 November 1768, p. 2, c. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Mills advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Hunter), 2 January 1756, p. 3, c. 1.

<sup>58</sup> Lindsay advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 12 August 1773, p. 2, c. 3; Nelson advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Clarkson and Davis), 3 July 1779, p. 3, c. 1.

the tobacco [house] where I must put some of my corn."<sup>59</sup>

By the 1770s, however, wheat and corn were among Virginia's staple crops, and the large granaries that planters described as "near the water" were clearly collection and staging points for the export trade. Two 50-foot granaries stood near stores, an association that suggests the specifically commercial nature of their function.<sup>60</sup> Smaller cribs and corn houses, those that ranged in size from 192 to 480 square feet, probably supplied grain for the diets of a white or black plantation household (fig. 17).

Most planters elected to subsume the remaining structures on their land within phrases like "and all other necessary outhouses." Still, there are eighty advertised plantations--those at the most advantaged end of the scale--with stables for the shelter of a few prized horses. Ninety-eight planters mentioned the presence of stores to house finished goods for sale or distribution. Eighty-three tracts were offered for sale with water, tub, tide, or wind mills for grinding and sifting grain. Gazette advertisers also made numerous references to the separate laundries, spinning houses, chair houses, hen houses, bake houses, lumber houses and school houses that made rural Virginia dwelling sites look like little towns. In 1786, Luigi Castiglioni summarized over a century of travelers's impressions in his characterization of a prosperous planter's seat. "The master's house," he wrote, is "on a good site, either on a hillside or a spacious plain and all around are the little dwellings of the overseer and the slaves, and likewise the kitchens and the barns, so that the whole complex looks like a small village."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Jack P. Greene, editor, The Diary of Colonel Landon Carter of Sabine Hall 1752-1778 (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1965), v. 1, p. 82.

<sup>60</sup> Pearson advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 1 July 1773, p. 4, c. 2; Faulconer advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Pinkney), 5 October 1775, p. 3, c. 3.

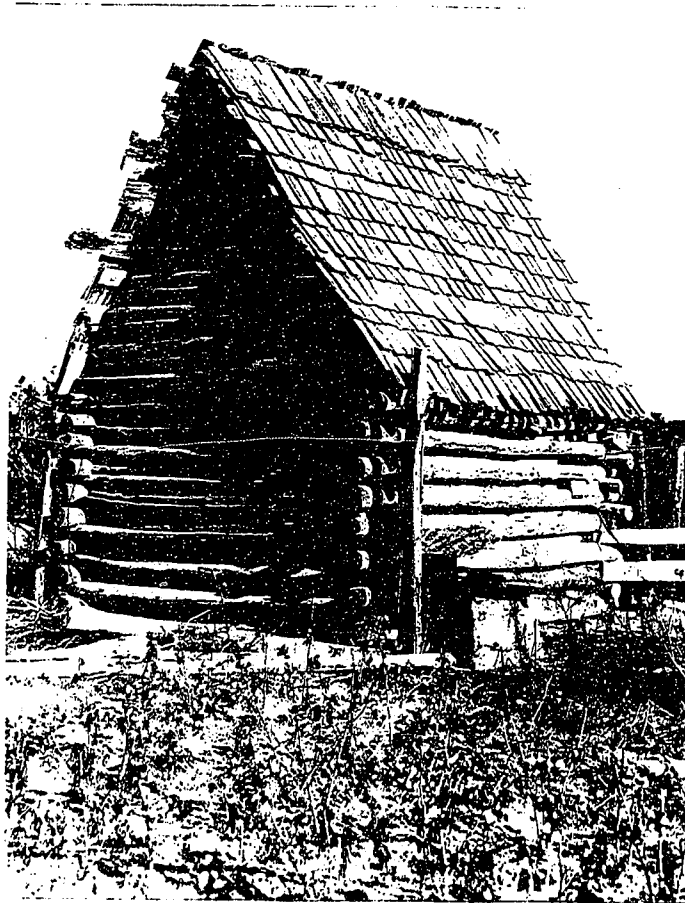


Fig. 17. Corn Crib, Surry County, Virginia, about 1930. (Susan Higginson Nash Collection, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.)

In terms of size, eighteenth-century Virginia outbuildings were generally comparable to Gazette-advertised dwellings. A few structures were very capacious, but over half of all dimensioned outbuildings enclosed no more than 576 square feet (table 8). Many service and agricultural buildings clearly contained loft space that was floored and perhaps planked, partitioned, or ceiled, but they were almost invariably one story in height. Planters mentioned only eight structures--a mill, a barn, a store, a granary, a stable, a store, and two lumberhouses--that were raised to two stories.

As a rule, outbuildings were more plainly and lightly fashioned than the houses they attended. Less than 2 percent of all 2083 advertised outbuildings were constructed of brick, and only 3 percent more had brick or stone support below their posts and sills. Storehouses were the only structures likely to have the masonry underpinning or cellars that could help protect their valuable contents of finished and sometimes imported goods. Among those outbuildings for which hearths were necessary or desirable features, only kitchens were likely to have masonry chimneys.<sup>62</sup> Across the eighteenth-century Virginia countryside, such unpretentious and unembellished structures crowded around the dwellings or straggled around the yards and fields of every prosperous planter (fig. 18). To Johann David Schoepf, who traveled across Virginia in 1783, they looked like "so many small, separate, badly kept cabins . . . of the structure and solidity of a house of cards."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Antonio Pace, editor, Luigi Castiglioni's Viaggio: Travels in the United States of North America, 1785-1787 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1983), pp. 193-194.

<sup>62</sup> Stores accounted for 39 percent of the brick and stone foundations. Only seventy-eight--under 4 percent--of all 2083 outbuildings had brick or stone chimneys. Forty-five, or 58 percent, of these were associated with kitchens.

TABLE 8  
OUTBUILDINGS ADVERTISED FOR SALE IN THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE  
DISTRIBUTED BY SQUARE FEET

<u>SQUARE FEET</u>	<u>COMMONEST DIMENSIONS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF BUILDINGS</u>	<u>PERCENT OF TOTAL</u>	<u>CUMULATIVE PERCENT</u>
64-100	8 x 8	6	3.3	3.3
120-144	12 x 12	6	3.3	6.7
192-240	16 x 12	13	7.2	13.9
256-320	16 x 16	14	7.8	21.7
384	24 x 16	9	5.0	26.7
400-480	28 x 16	21	11.7	38.3
512	32 x 16	14	7.8	46.1
520-576	24 x 24	10	5.6	51.7
640-660	32 x 20	19	10.6	62.2
800	40 x 20	38	21.0	83.3
840-960	36 x 24	10	5.6	88.9
1008-1144	32 x 32	6	3.3	92.2
1248-1408	44 x 32	5	2.8	95.0
1440-1600	80 x 20	5	2.8	97.8
1800	150 x 12	1	0.5	98.3
2304-3456	50 x 50	3	1.7	100.0
TOTALS		180	100.0	100.0

Advertisers specified length and width for 180 outbuildings of all types. The commonest outbuilding form measured forty feet by twenty feet and enclosed 800 square feet. Fifteen barns and thirteen tobacco houses contributed to this trend. Four warehouses, two kitchens, two work houses, a lumber house, and a slave dwelling completed the total of thirty-eight structures with this form.



Fig. 18. House and Outbuildings, Warwick County, Virginia, about 1930. (Singleton Peabody Morehead Collection, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.)

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Notations concerning houses and outbuildings are the most arresting components of the Gazette advertisements, but the majority of words and phrases in any single notice are devoted to the land--its contours and composition, its proximity to water, how it was divided and improved. While some advertisers relied on summarizing assurances that their land was "well wooded and watered" or "in good order for cropping," a striking feature of the Gazette notices is the range and quantity of terms that planters employed to depict the countryside.

Among the Gazette advertisements are eighteen terms for variations in terrain. Planters mentioned high ground that was free of stone, dense with timber, rich enough to plant with crops. Christopher Macrae praised his high land in Albemarle County as good summer range for cattle.<sup>64</sup> Other planters emphasized the arable qualities of their low land. William Anderson's Surry County plantation had low ground that "lies very level, and well to the plow."<sup>65</sup> Many noted that their property encompassed swamps like one John Smith advertised as "well timbered with cypress" and full of thick mud that made "exceeding good manure for corn, wheat, and tobacco."<sup>66</sup> Among those planters who mentioned salt or fresh marshland was Edward Voss. His King and Queen County plantation included "near 100 acres of wild oats marsh capable of supporting 300 head of cattle."<sup>67</sup> Numerous other advertisers noted the

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<sup>63</sup> Johann David Schoepf, Travels in the Confederation (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1911), v. 2, p. 33.

<sup>64</sup> Macrae advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 16 September 1773, p. 3, c. 2.

<sup>65</sup> Anderson advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 30 July 1772, p. 3, c. 2.

<sup>66</sup> Smith advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 30 June 1768, p. 3, c. 1.

meadows and pastures they had reclaimed from their soggy bottom land.<sup>68</sup> Planters also differentiated soil itself with twenty-seven distinct terms. There was mulatto soil, pignut soil, and soil of the red kind. Others soils were stiff, light, or rich. To many, soils were active and sometimes willful participants in the business of planting. Virginians indicated as much when they advertised their soils as fast, strong, thirsty, capable, lively, or kind.

Virginia's major navigable rivers served as principal boundaries or points of orientation for almost every Gazette-advertised tract, but the aqueous resources of the countryside made their appearance in dozens of other ways as well. In all, the advertisements contain thirty-seven nouns and twenty-three adjectives for water and its characteristics. There were broad creeks with "ship water [running] close along shore in a safe harbour," never-failing streams that could power mills, and bold branches that might be dammed and overflowed to make "many acres of moist meadow."<sup>69</sup> Anthony Winston's mill pond on Beaverdam Creek abounded "with fine fish, peculiar to that stream, which may be caught in great numbers nine months in the year by angling."<sup>70</sup> Other planters detailed the advantages of river guts "esteemed the best for fishing and fowling" as well as marshes and pocosins that harbored quantities of luscious oysters and crabs (fig. 19).<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Voss advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 18 July 1766, p. 4; c. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Willis advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 2 April 1767, p. 3, c. 1; Watson advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 8 December 1774, p. 3, c. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Love advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Dixon and Hunter), 26 September 1777, p. 3, c. 1; Jones advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Dixon and Hunter), 13 November 1778, p. 2, c. 2.

<sup>70</sup> Winston advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 14 July 1768, p. 3, c. 1 and Virginia Gazette (Rind), 21 July 1768, p. 3, c. 2.





Fig. 19. Providence Forge Gristmill and Millpond, New Kent County, Virginia, about 1890. (George and Huestis P. Cook Collection, Valentine Museum.)

Equally prominent among the Gazette advertisements are words and phrases devoted to plantation improvements. Most planters mentioned that the tract for sale had been partly cleared, fenced, and planted, but many discussed more specific and varied developments as well. Virginians dammed, banked, drained, or diverted their watercourses to produce valuable ponds, fisheries, meadows, mill races, quays, landings, and causeways. They ditched, manured, mounded, ploughed, reclaimed, fallowed, mowed, or overflowed their land to make fields, hills, ranges, pastures, orchards, yards, and gardens. In all, the Gazette notices contain seventy-two nouns and verbs devoted to agricultural practices and results such as these.

Travelers through early Virginia frequently penned unflattering accounts of the desultory agricultural practices they observed. Just south of the Mattaponi River in 1777, Ebenezer Hazard "saw several pieces of land which would make a good meadow, but the Virginians do not appear to know the use of a meadow." In 1783, Johann David Schoepf remarked that "in these lower parts of Virginia . . . they do not understand how to make use of their marshes." Isaac Weld was among many visitors who generalized about Virginians's "ruinous system" of staple-crop agriculture, which involved "working the same piece of land year after year, till it was totally exhausted; after this it was left neglected."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Coutts advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 14 January 1773, p. 3, c. 2; Boush advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie), 1 May 1778, p. 4, c. 1.

<sup>72</sup> Fred Shelley, editor, "The Journal of Ebenezer Hazard in Virginia, 1777," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 62 (October 1954), p. 404; Schoepf, Travels in the Confederation, vol. 2, p. 89; Isaac Weld, Travels through the States of North America and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada during the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797 (London: J. Stockdale, 1799), v. 3, p. 151.

Descriptions like these no doubt do justice to the level of husbandry that most small and poor planters were forced to practice, but as depictions of early Virginia agriculture, they cannot prevail against the Gazette advertisements and their diverse vocabulary of words for natural and improved aspects of eastern Virginia's land and water.<sup>73</sup> The profusion of names and modifiers indicate that the treatment and differentiation of these resources were matters of frequent, discerning conversation among Virginia planters and those whose labor they owned or hired. The range of distinct verbs make explicit the many forms of plantation improvement that a Virginia landowner might authorize or undertake.<sup>74</sup>

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As descriptive inventories with telling omissions and key emphases, the Gazette advertisements convey much about eighteenth-century rural buildings and the plantations where they

<sup>73</sup> Like the makers and users of any language, early Virginians relied on words to sort, categorize, and rank the components of their world. One clue to the importance people place on any topic is the quantity of words they use to designate its qualities and variations. Subjects to which they devote many nouns, verbs, and modifiers are subjects to which they assign much importance. Citing the work of Stephen A. Tyler, Dell Upton has used this approach to language in his study of room names for early Virginia houses. Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture," pp. 98-102. Stephen A. Tyler, Cognitive Anthropology (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969).

<sup>74</sup> The best treatment of Virginia planters as agriculturalists of considerable care and skill is T. H. Breen, Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of the Revolution (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). For evidence that Virginia crop yields--an accepted index of soil condition--did not substantially decline between 1620 and 1820, see Lorena Walsh, "Plantation Management in the Chesapeake, 1620-1820," Journal of Economic History 49 (June 1989), pp. 393-406.

stood. As compositions--deliberate and cohesive depictions of landscape--the Gazette notices yield still more. When a planter shaped the domestic and agricultural settlement around him into a series of sentences announcing it for sale, he revealed his mental way of organizing what he saw. In this sense, the sequence and cadence of the Gazette advertisements represent the stance and priorities of Virginia's landowning planters--their specific point of view.<sup>75</sup>

Consulted as texts, the most striking characteristic of the Gazette notices is the similarity of their structure. Most advertisements open with a reference to the acreage of the tract and the county in which it was located. Next are usually two or more explicit points of reference: "two miles above the Long Bridge . . . ten miles from good warehouses on York and James rivers . . . eight miles from Mr. Holt's Forge."<sup>76</sup> These locators told readers the position and relative convenience of land they might want to buy, but they also demonstrate that advertising planters thought of themselves as positioned at the center of a constellation of towns, public warehouses, courthouses, and churches. In their frequent specifications of mileage, planters also revealed their perception of each dwelling site as connected to other nearby destinations by a network of intersecting roads. Sometimes these roads were as

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<sup>75</sup> For a persuasive discussion of how perceptions of a landscape can vary, see D. W. Meinig, "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene," The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes, D. W. Meinig, editor, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 33-48. For another study that makes use of newspaper advertisements to determine distinctions in colonial points of view, see Jonathan Prude, "To Look Upon the 'Lower Sort': Runaway Ads and the Appearance of Unfree Laborers in America, 1750-1800," Journal of American History 78 (June 1991), pp. 124-159.

<sup>76</sup> Unsigned advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 23 September 1773, p. 3, c. 2.

straight as the one that connected Robert Carter's Corotoman with Christ Church in Lancaster County, but even when they meandered, planters imagined and represented the roads of eastern Virginia as extending forthrightly between their origins and their destinations.<sup>77</sup> This trick of perception confused and annoyed many a visitor to Virginia. "The universal answer one gets, on asking the way," Schoepf complained, "is: keep in the main road, or straight on;--everyone knowing the roads in the parish and thinking that even strangers must find it easy to keep in the straight path which is commonly very crooked."<sup>78</sup>

After their statements of location, planters proceeded to describe the property they had for sale, and their hierarchical arrangement of particulars reinforces their depiction of themselves at the center--or the top--of things. Among the 179 plantation advertisements that were penned by resident owners, two sequences of topics prevail, and the distinguishing characteristic of each has to do with the position of the principal dwelling.<sup>79</sup> The format chosen by ninety-seven of the resident owners opens with a description of the planter's dwelling (fig. 20). Anthony Walke of Mansfield in Prince George County was among those advertisers who arranged his plantation description this way. Following an introduction that concerned acreage and location, he wrote: "on the

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<sup>77</sup> Dell Upton sees the long straight drive connecting Corotoman and Christ Church, Lancaster as a manifestation of Robert Carter's impulse to shape the countryside hierarchically around himself. "White and Black Landscapes," *Places*, p. 64.

<sup>78</sup> Schoepf, *Travels in the Confederation*, vol. 2, p. 41.

<sup>79</sup> Notices written for lots, quarters, and tenanted plantations as well as those penned by executors, agents, and creditors share many characteristics of format with those descriptions authored by the resident planters themselves, but they are commonly less detailed and less consistent in structure.

*To be SOLD, in Hanover county,*



**T**WO tracts of LAND, one of which contains 550 acres, on which is a new dwelling-house with two rooms on a floor, a brick chimney in the middle, with fire-places in each room, all convenient out-houses, a garden newly paled in, a quantity of valuable fruit trees, and ground enough cleared to work 4 or 5 hands, the whole under a good fence; there is a creek runs through the land, which makes low grounds suitable for a meadow, if cleared. The other tract contains 227 acres, with much such conveniences as the first. Each tract is very level, and lies about 12 miles above the court-house. Long credit will be given for two thirds of the money. The terms may be known by applying to me, on the first mentioned land.

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**WILLIAM TOMPKINS.**

Fig. 20. William Tompkins Advertisement, *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 11 July 1766, p. 3, c. 1. (Massachusetts Historical Society and Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.)

said plantation is a good dwelling-house with four rooms." Matthew Marable selected the same composition for the Mecklenburg County plantation he advertised in 1773. "I propose selling the following lands" he announced, including "the place whereon I live, a tract containing 715 acres, improved with a dwelling house 48 by 26." This house was distinguished by such niceties as brick chimneys, sash windows, and, on the interior, convenient closets and beaufaits. Marable thought it very genteel, "except a small matter of painting."<sup>80</sup>

Once planters like Walke and Marable had oriented prospective buyers with notes about the main house, they continued their discussions quite predictably along a hierarchy of plantation features. First come mention of the domestic service buildings--kitchen, laundry, smokehouse and dairy. Then follow agricultural buildings like tobacco houses, granaries, and barns. Rough work buildings such as these were often dispersed about the plantation, but in an advertiser's idealized depiction of the landscape, all service and agricultural structures appear clustered together around the main dwelling.

Following the buildings come references to the curtilage and other components of landscape that directly concerned the planter's household. These included poultry and stable yards, herb and vegetable gardens, and other plantings such as Anthony Walke's "young bearing apple and peach orchard, of 240 trees."<sup>81</sup> Ranked next are notes devoted to principal crops--those in cultivation or

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<sup>80</sup> Walke advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Hunter), 17 January 1751, p. 4, c. 2; Marable advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 5 August 1773, p. 4, c. 2-3.

<sup>81</sup> Walke advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Hunter), 17 January 1751, p. 4, c. 2. Planters mentioned yards for forty-three and gardens for 202 of the total 1019 Gazette-advertised sites. Orchards appear in the advertisements of 362 of the 722 plantations.

those best suited to the soil and terrain. Matthew Marable remarked that his plantation "produces everything that I have tried in it very well, but being of a stiff and thirsty nature, winter grain is most applicable."<sup>82</sup> Advertisers then focused on the improvements they had made to the natural contours and substance of their property--the creeks dammed for millponds, the fields broken, fenced, and dunged. At the close of these advertisements are descriptions of such natural advantages as plentiful woodland and fertile soil. These helped to persuade interested readers that the advertised plantation had barely begun to surrender its bounty.

In the eighty-two notices organized according to a second format, discussion of the principal dwelling is positioned near the center of the text (fig. 21). Announcements of this sort customarily begin with the site's inherent potential. George Boswell wrote in 1767 that his Gloucester County property was "almost surrounded by a creek so that it will take but little fencing to enclose the whole."<sup>83</sup> There usually follow notes concerning the quantity of acres cleared and fenced, and the nature of crops in cultivation. Among advertisements like Boswell's, these matters usually consume about half of the text.

At the heart of these notices planters introduced the main dwelling. Boswell's tract had a "very good dwelling-house, 45 by 20, underpinned, and gable ends of brick, with two rooms on a floor, and a large passage." Like the other advertisers who favored this composition, Boswell then enumerated the domestic and agricultural structures. A "kitchen, quarter, dairy, meat house, a good new barn

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<sup>82</sup> Marable advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 5 August 1773, p. 4, c. 2-3. Planters discussed crops--both potential and planted--for 220 of all 722 advertised plantations.

<sup>83</sup> Boswell advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 10 September 1767, p. 2, c. 2.



For *S A L E*, for ready money, payable in loan office certificates of the  
state of Maryland,

**T**HE LAND I live on, which I bought for 300 acres more or less,  
but think contains 400, situate in *Fairfax* county, in *Virginia*,  
distant from *Colchester* one mile and an half, from *Dumfries* eight miles,  
and from *Alexandria* sixteen miles, binding on *Occoquan* bay and *Jonathan's*  
creek, where fish may be had in plenty all the year, the situation  
beautiful, with a view of *Potomack* river for twenty miles, the land  
well timbered, and about 100 acres cleared, joining the bay and creek,  
level and good, has on it (besides 5 acres not yet drained) 22 acres of  
exceeding rich well improved meadow, yielding annually 40 tons of hay,  
several springs of good water, some fruit trees, a good garden, a dwell-  
ling-house with 3 rooms below and 2 above, and two brick chimneys, a  
kitchen 28 feet by 16, with a brick chimney and two fire places, a spin-  
ning house 26 feet by 16, a weaver's shop 28 feet by 18, a smoke-house,  
dairy, stable, barn, fish house, and other necessary outhouses. The  
plantation is well fenced and in good order, affords good pasturage, and  
adjoining it is an extensive range for stock; it is convenient to church,  
and about 4 miles by water from 2 furnaces, a forge, and the best grist  
mill in the commonwealth. The land shall be conveyed to the purchaser  
upon delivery of the certificates, but I will not yield up possession of  
the houses and plantation till the middle of *April*, unless I find it con-  
venient to remove sooner. My price for this land is less than 4 and a  
half years purchase on 22 acres of it.

LEE MASSEY.

FAIRFAX, February 10, 1779.

(11)

Fig. 21. Lee Massey Advertisement, *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Nicholson), 19 February 1779, p. 3, c. 2. (Virginia State Library and Archives and Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.)

40 by 20, and several other convenient houses" were among his architectural accoutrements. Then came the shaped and planted features of the dwelling site. Boswell mentioned only "a variety of fruit trees," although planters often devoted much space to the particulars of their gardens, orchards, and domestic enclosures. Following these matters were descriptions of more extensive improvements--marshes drained for meadows, pastures set with clover. In the closing sentences of these notices, planters usually made several additional points about the natural resources of their property. Boswell's was "as plentiful a place for fish and oysters, as any in the colony."<sup>84</sup> Thus, these advertisements end as they were begun, with the inherent promise of the land.

While there is considerable variation among the texts of individual advertisements in the Gazette, the two formats--and the conception of the Virginia plantation countryside they represent--are unmistakable. Advertisers discussed six categories of features in both compositions. These include domestic service buildings, agricultural structures, aspects of curtilage, major plantings, plantation improvements, and finally, natural advantages of land and water. In both formats, these categories appear ranked in a way that suggests progressive stages in the shaping, partitioning, and refining of the countryside (fig. 22).<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Boswell advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 10 September 1767, p. 2, c. 2.

<sup>85</sup> This sense of how eighteenth-century Virginia planters ranked their assets is similar to Robert Blair St. George's argument that seventeenth-century New England farmers perceived and organized their land, buildings, crops, foodstuffs, and household accoutrements in terms of how intensively each was refined or advanced from its natural or unbroken state. St. George, "Set Thine House in Order: The Domestication of the Yeomanry in Seventeenth-Century New England," New England Begins: The Seventeenth Century, Jonathan L. Fairbanks and Robert F. Trent, editors, (Boston:

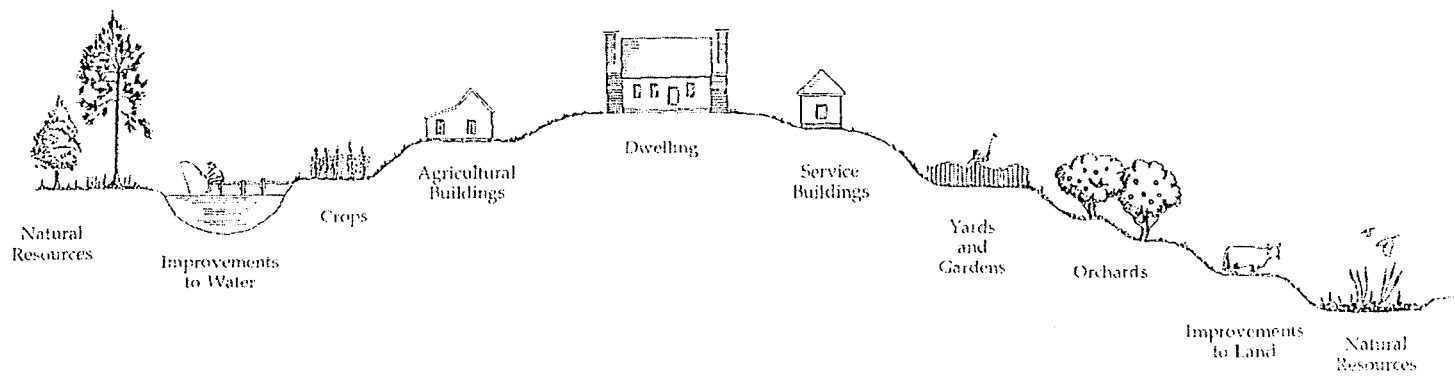


Fig. 22. Arrangement of Plantation Buildings, Improvements, and Resources as Presented in Virginia Gazette Advertisements.  
(Drawing, Mark R. Wenger.)

Positioned at the top or the center of this abstracted plantation landscape was the planter's dwelling itself. Some advertisers favored their houses with detailed notations concerning form, construction, and finish, while others made only perfunctory references to size or shape. In any case, the planter's house, as it figures in the Virginia Gazette advertisements, was more than a place of dwelling. It was also the vantage from which a planter surveyed and dominated his idealized landscape and its ranked sets of conveniences. Many advertisers made this perception explicit in their remarks about the view their dwelling sites could "command." Francis Willis praised his York County plantation as "perfectly agreeable and advantageous in every respect, having a prospect both up and down the river as far as the eye can reach." William Jones wrote that the dwelling of his King William County tract "stands on a very considerable eminence, commanding the low grounds, and 4 beautiful prospects of the neighboring county."<sup>86</sup>

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These crisp and orderly presentations in the Gazette reveal not only how planters mentally positioned themselves amidst the countryside of early Virginia, they reveal how planters cultivated and envisioned their place in the social order of early Virginia as well. In almost every respect, the texture and pace of life in eighteenth-century Virginia was determined by the impulse of prosperous landowning planters to achieve, maintain, and demonstrate their authority over others. Wealthy Virginians like those who read and hired space in the Gazette often structured their routines around such customs as elections, horse races, dances, and Museum of Fine Arts, 1982), v. 2, pp. 159-351, reprinted in Upton and Vlach, editors, Common Places, pp. 336-364.

<sup>86</sup> Willis advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 2 April 1767, p. 3, c. 1; Jones advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Dixon and Hunter), 13 November 1778, p. 2, c. 2.

attendance at church or court because these public occasions represented opportunities to test and reconfirm their prominence in a competitive and hierarchical society.<sup>87</sup> Some planters found these performances so resonant that they quite literally took them home. In their building of expensive and spacious houses with well finished rooms and elegant furnishings, Virginians adopted for their private domains the artifactual language that reinforced order and hierarchy in their public settings. In a sense, they created public buildings of their own in which to host dinners, dancing parties, and other domesticated versions of public rituals.<sup>88</sup>

Advertisements in the Gazette indicate, however, that the dwellings of most Virginia planters had more in common with tobacco houses than with courthouses. This prevalence of unpretentious housing suggests that for most Virginians, gregarious practices involving movement and competition, challenge and resolution were but one part of the story. Performing intricate dances, accepting the gamble of elections and races, taking ranked seats in church or court--these were all actions that occurred in public settings where landowning planters circulated among

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<sup>87</sup> Aspects of this impulse have been explored and explained best by T. H. Breen, "Horses and Gentlemen: The Cultural Significance of Gambling among the Gentry of Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series, 34 (April 1977), pp. 239-57; Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); and Dell Upton, Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia (New York and Cambridge: Architectural History Foundation and MIT Press, 1986).

<sup>88</sup> Dell Upton argues the reverse--that wealthy planters enhanced their own authority with the ideological power of the Anglican Church when they built and furnished parish churches with the materials and motifs that distinguished their genteel dwellings. Upton, Holy Things and Profane, pp. 101-162.

themselves as well as before a constituency of relations, neighbors, and servants. Once their attention shifted to domestic and agricultural concerns, planters entertained very different priorities. Enconced in houses that they imagined at the very top or center of a fixed and orderly rural landscape, planters idealized themselves as unquestionably in control. Amidst their extensive households and populous labor forces, their complex agricultural operations and sensitive commercial interests, these Virginians had no taste for ambiguous situations or games of chance. They demanded for themselves--and devoted enormous energies toward creating--a settled landscape of well managed improvements with established boundaries and valuable contents.<sup>89</sup>

This impulse to shape and perceive the early Virginia countryside in terms of perimeters and contents helps to explain an eighteenth-century housing tradition that ranged dramatically from the grand and formal of design to the small and slight of build. For some planters, imposing houses with symmetrical forms and classical details were the requisite centers of a landscape they both shaped and imagined hierarchically.<sup>90</sup> Most Virginians, however,

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<sup>89</sup> Planters's depictions of the rural Virginia landscape as measured, structured, and orderly is strikingly consistent with their impulse to guard and modulate their emotions, to keep their feelings "under good fences." Jan Lewis, "Domestic Tranquility and the Management of Emotion among the Gentry of Pre-Revolutionary Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series, 39 (January 1982), pp. 135-149.

<sup>90</sup> Henry Glassie, Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), pp. 176-193; James Deetz, In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life (Garden City: Anchor/Doubleday, 1977), pp. 28-43; Mark P. Leone, "The Georgian Order as the Order of Merchant Capitalism in Annapolis, Maryland," The Recovery of Meaning: Historical Archaeology in the Eastern United States, Mark P. Leone and Parker B. Potter, Jr., editors,

enjoyed their agreeable prospects from within dwellings that were modest in size, plain in finish, and often fashioned entirely of wood. Houses like these made sense amidst a landscape of ranked and tended enclosures because planters comprehended their dwellings principally as containers. They demonstrated as much in the Gazette when they characterized houses in terms of exterior dimensions and quantities of rooms.

Eighteenth-century probate inventories suggest that Virginia houses were often crammed full of domestic furnishings as well. In 1792, the hall of Peter Cox's small Northumberland County dwelling contained two desks, a chest, two tables, six leather-bottomed chairs, and eighteen flagged chairs.<sup>91</sup> However elegant or prized this furniture may have been, it surely hindered the ease with which Peter Cox and his wife moved about their house. Early travelers also remarked on the overfurnished quality of many Virginia interiors. In 1806, Benjamin Latrobe spent a night with William Robertson in Stafford County. Robertson, whose log dwelling measured 24 by 18 feet, put his guest to bed in the smaller of the two first-story rooms (fig. 23). Surveying his surroundings, Latrobe found that "the bed occupied exactly one half of the room, a large chest, a trunk, one chair, and a very smartly filled up toilet took up nearly all the remainder."<sup>92</sup> Loaded-up dwellings like those of Peter Cox and William Robertson were the domestic equivalents of a firm and well fenced marsh "which will maintain two hundred head of cattle without feeding in winter," a securely fixed river trap where "between 2 and 3000 white shads may be caught in the spring" or a

(Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), pp. 235-261.

<sup>91</sup> Cox Inventory, p. 681.

<sup>92</sup> Edward C. Carter II, John C. Van Horne, and Lee W. Formwalt, editors, The Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 1799-1820: From Philadelphia to New Orleans (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 78.



Fig. 23. Benjamin Henry Latrobe, "William Robertson's House, near His Quarry on Acquia Creek," Stafford County, Virginia, 1806. (Maryland Historical Society.)



garden enclosed with "the best saw'd framing and pales" and filled with "plenty of vegetables and other necessities."<sup>93</sup>

In their depictions of dwellings, outbuildings, yards, and fields as containers with secure boundaries and valuable contents, Gazette advertisements reveal that most Virginia planters relied on the visible signs of work well performed to express their authority over their households and plantations. Without exception, advertisers of property for sale represented themselves as attentive and diligent managers who toiled hard and long with their families, employees, and slaves in order to ditch, hoe, plow, fence, plant, set, sow, flood, and drain their property. Many planters even used standards of labor completed or calculated to reinforce their claims about a tract's value. David Long, who reckoned that his King William County plantation had "new ground cleared to work six or eight hands," was among 126 planters who measured land prepared for cropping not in terms of acreage but according to the number of slaves whose energy it could absorb.<sup>94</sup> Other advertisers, like Miles Cary, whose Southampton County plantation offered "above 30,000 corn hills cleared and under a good fence," calculated their improved land in terms of the corn or tobacco hills that resulted only from arduous days of chopping, breaking, and hoeing.<sup>95</sup>

Planters used numerous other ways to quantify the work performed or required to make their property orderly and productive.

<sup>93</sup> Townes advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 3 March 1771, p. 4, c. 2; Glass advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 4 February 1768, p. 4, c. 4; Penn advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 21 March 1771, p. 3, c. 2; Timberlake advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 31 October 1771, p. 4, c. 3.

<sup>92</sup> Long advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Hunter), 20 June 1751, p. 3, c. 2.

<sup>95</sup> Cary advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 25 July 1766, p. 3, c. 1.

Hamilton St. George described his Hog Island land as "so well fenced that it will not want a rail for seven years, and since I have had it in possession have laid upwards of four thousand loads of dung on it." William Peachy boasted that his Richmond County orchard "produces 1000 gallons of good cyder, and 100 of brandy." Roger Dixon claimed in 1769 that the soil of his Spotsylvania County plantation was rich enough to yield 2000 bushels of wheat and 250 bushels of Indian corn, as well as quantities of barley, oats and rye "and the whole only with eight hands and four horses."<sup>96</sup>

Virginia Gazette advertisements reveal that eighteenth-century planters set great store by property that looked well tended and well improved. Many of them labored mightily to organize, regularize--even to sculpt--their tracts of land into orderly, agreeable plantations. The formal terraces and decorative gardens that a few wealthy landowners excavated and laid out were only the most decorative versions of the approach most planters took to their entire rural landscape.<sup>97</sup> Shaped terraces and symmetrical gardens, like genteel houses designed in the European classical tradition, were devices through which some articulated their esteem for order and control. Still, academic architecture and formal landscape design were seldom--not usually--the means by which landowning planters expressed their command of the countryside. The Gazette advertisements confirm that eighteenth-century

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<sup>96</sup> St. George advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 8 October 1772, p. 3, c. 2; Peachy advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 14 February 1771, p. 3, c. 1; Dixon advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 8 June 1769, p. 3, c. 1.

<sup>97</sup> Only five advertisers characterized their gardens in ways that suggest symmetrical or otherwise decoratively shaped contours and plantings. For the elite diversion of landscape gardening in early Virginia, see Peter Martin, The Pleasure Gardens of Virginia: From Jamestown to Jefferson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

Virginians also perceived and communicated a sense of control in well-ditched meadows, securely palmed yards, densely furnished dwellings, cribs and tobacco houses bulging with a successful harvest. For most planters, these and other signs of work competently directed and resources well improved were the most substantial, compelling demonstrations that they could successfully organize, manage, and dominate their households, their plantations, their world.

## CHAPTER 4: HOUSES, WEALTH, AND STATUS

It is no surprise that the integrated relationship between eighteenth-century housing and the plantation landscape has eluded scholars who confine their investigation to the surviving architectural evidence of Virginia's colonial period. A systematic study of forty-three eighteenth-century houses built in the four easternmost counties of Virginia's Northern Neck yields little evidence of colonial Virginia's architectural realities. While almost all colonial Virginia houses were fashioned entirely of wood, sixteen of the Northern Neck "study houses" were built of brick or stone.<sup>1</sup> While most of Virginia's houses were set on earthfast posts and heated with wooden chimneys, all twenty-seven of the wood-framed study houses were constructed on solid brick foundations and finished with brick chimneys and--in three cases--brick gable ends.<sup>2</sup> Brick nogging laid between framing members imparts even greater substance to several of the wooden houses.<sup>3</sup> None of the

<sup>1</sup> These sixteen masonry houses represent 37 percent of the total forty-three Northern Neck study houses. By contrast, masonry houses constitute less than 10 percent of all 919 houses advertised in the eighteenth-century Virginia Gazette. For more on this topic, see Chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup> These twenty-seven framed houses represent 63 percent of the total forty-three Northern Neck study houses. By contrast, wooden houses with masonry chimneys and foundations amount to no more than 28.2 percent of all 919 houses advertised in the eighteenth-century Virginia Gazette. The three houses with brick gable ends are Monaskon, Oakley, and Towles Point, all in Lancaster County.

<sup>3</sup> Houses known to have brick nogging beneath their

twenty-seven framed study houses ever had a wooden chimney, and Towles Point in Lancaster County is the only one to have been built originally on earthfast posts (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup>

The Northern Neck houses are exceptional in size as well as construction. Documentary indications are that only about 24 percent of all Virginia dwellings enclosed 800 square feet or more, but twenty-five of the forty-three study houses--or 58 percent--have ground dimensions that encompass at least that much space. While the majority of Virginia house plans involved only one or two principal rooms, the Rochester house in Westmoreland County is the only one of the forty-three study houses to enclose a one-room plan weatherboard sheathing include Monaskon and Oakley in Lancaster County; Clifton in Northumberland County; Bladensfield and Grove Mount in Richmond County; the Rochester house in Westmoreland County. Here and hereafter, all undocumented statements concerning the physical characteristics of any of the forty-three Northern Neck houses are based on field examination of the houses themselves.

<sup>4</sup> Towles Point has vanished, but it stood long enough to attract the attention of fieldworkers for the Historic American Buildings Survey. The resulting drawings and photographs are very unanalytical, but they show clearly enough that the house was built in several stages. Almost certainly, the earliest section was a one-room framed structure with earthfast corner and intermediate posts that interrupted the sills. A photograph of this structural detail appears in Chapter 3. During the eighteenth century, the house was expanded with a one-room addition that was set at a sufficient distance from the original structure to permit the enclosing of a central passage. This addition was constructed over a brick cellar and incorporated a Flemish-bond brick gable end. In one or more a separate eighteenth-century building campaigns, the original earthfast posts were replaced with brick piers and the wood-framed gable end of the original structure was replaced with a gable end built of brick. After 1800, the house received a series of rear shed additions. Historic American Buildings Survey No. VA-62, 1933-1940, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

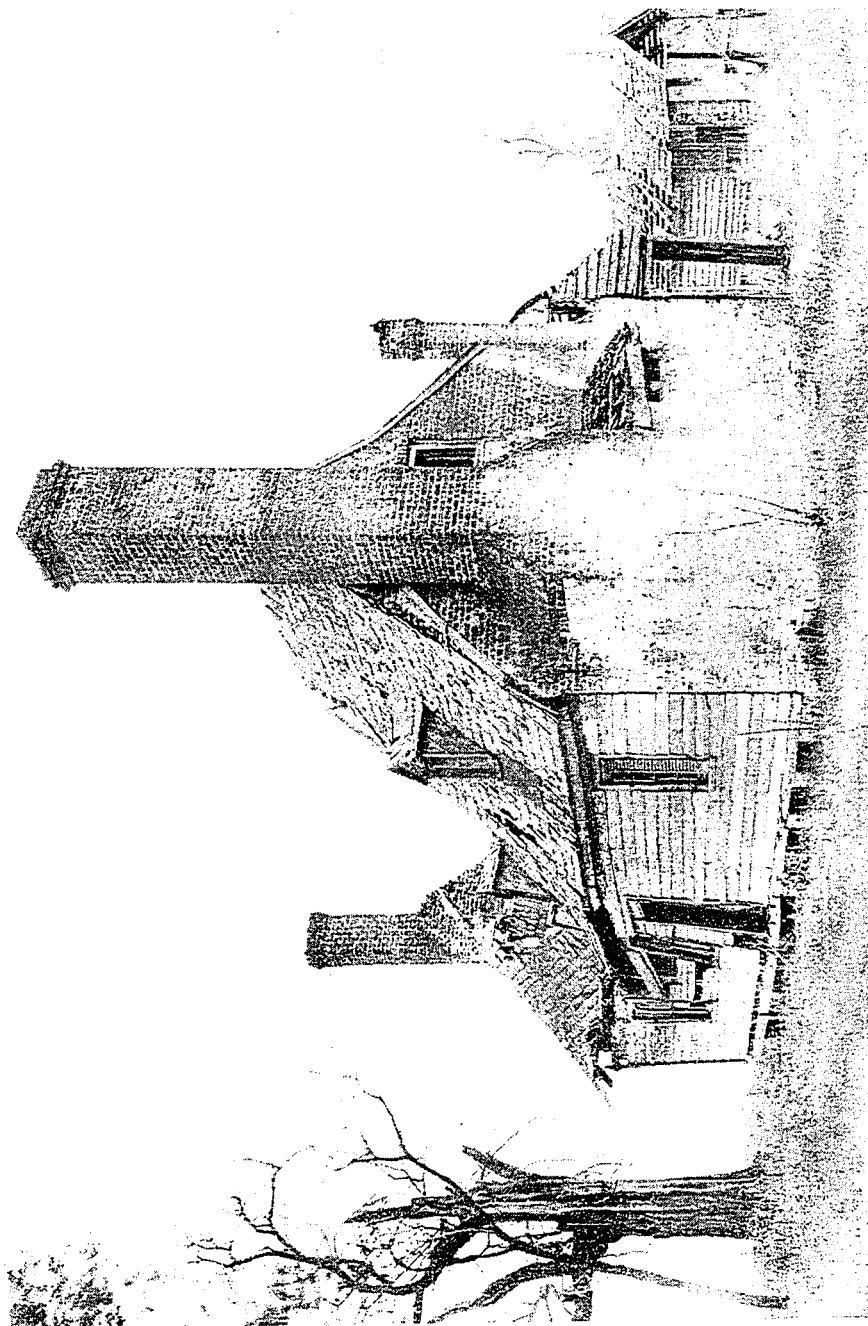


Fig. 1. Towles Point, Lancaster County, Virginia, 1937. (Photo, John O. Brostrup, Historic American Building Survey, Library of Congress.)

(fig. 2).<sup>5</sup> Another five houses contain two-room plans with no passage or entry to separate circulation from living space.<sup>6</sup> Eleven of the Northern Neck study houses incorporate entries or passages into two-room plans.<sup>7</sup> Twenty-six, or about 60 percent, of the study houses enclose at least three first-floor rooms and at least one passage or entry in their eighteenth-century forms.<sup>8</sup>

By the standards of those Virginia dwellings that dominate documentary and archaeological sources, the forty-three Northern Neck houses are extraordinarily solid and capacious. Indeed, it is

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<sup>5</sup> Architectural historians customarily distinguish a one-room house, which encloses but a single room, from a house with a one-room plan, which encloses a single room on the main floor. It is possible, as is the case the the Rochester house, for one or two additional rooms to be floored, sealed, or partitioned in the loft space above stairs. Five other study houses probably originally had one-room plans, although all were enlarged before the end of the colonial period. They include Millenbeck and Towles Point in Lancaster County; Linden Farm in Richmond County; the Monroe house and Popes Creek in Westmoreland County. For more on the predominance of houses with one- and two-room plans in colonial Virginia, see Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>6</sup> The five study houses with two-room plans include Huntons, Merry Point, and Shearmans Ferry in Lancaster County; the Cloughton house and Mount Zion in Northumberland County.

<sup>7</sup> The eleven houses with two-room plans augmented by entries or passages are Paynes Shop, Towles Point, and Verville in Lancaster County; Clifton, the Cox house, and Roadview in Northumberland County; Woodford in Richmond County; Blenheim, Elba, and Hague, and the Monroe house in Westmoreland County.

<sup>8</sup> Among the twenty-six study houses that enclose three- or four-room plans with passages or entries are Belle Isle, Belmont, Millenbeck, Monaskon, Morattico, and Oakley in Lancaster County; Ditchley and Hurstville in Northumberland County; Bladensfield, Edgehill, Grove Mount, Indian Banks, Linden Farm, Menokin, Mount Airy, and Sabine Hall in Richmond County; Chantilly, Cople Glebe, Currioman, Kirnan, Peckatone, Popes Creek, Stratford, Twiford, Walnut Hill, and Wilton in Westmoreland County.

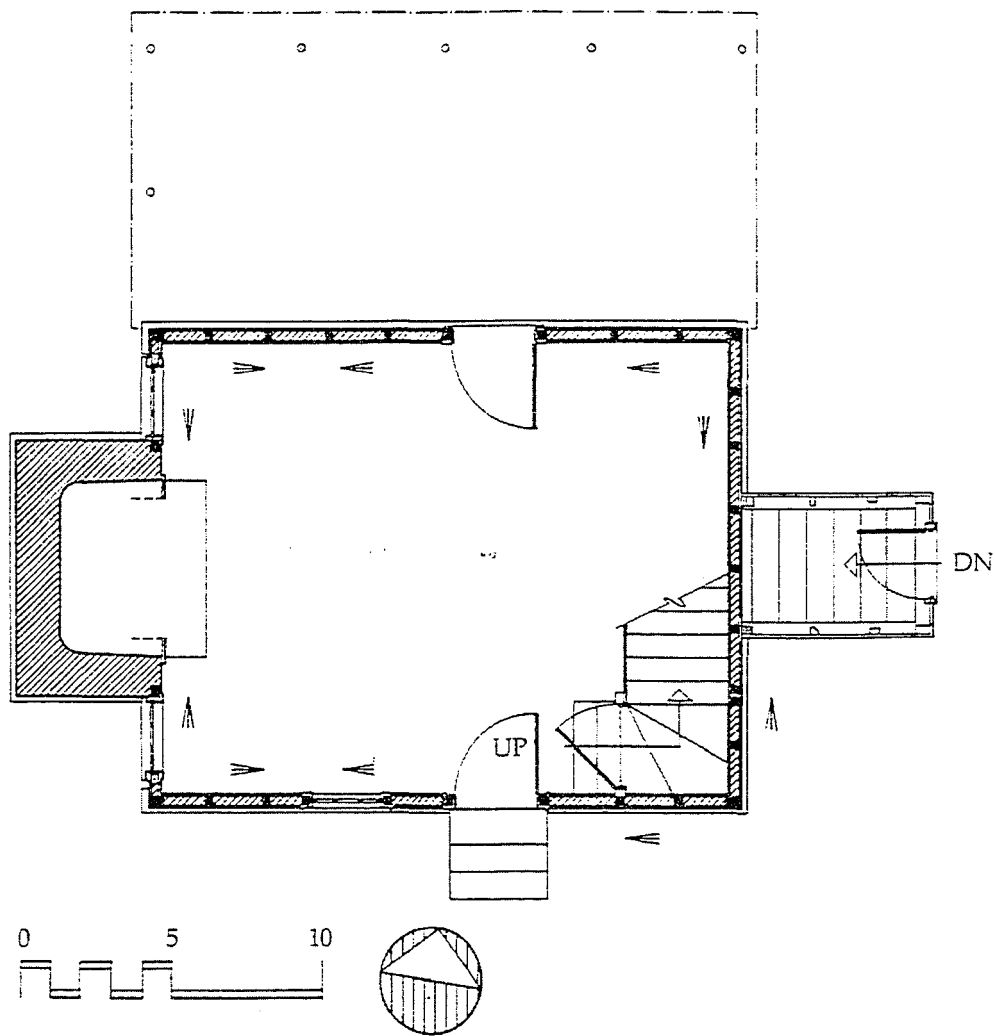


Fig. 2. Plan of the Rochester House, Westmoreland County, Virginia.  
(Drawing, Edward A. Chappell and Willie Graham, Colonial  
Williamsburg Foundation.)



precisely because these structures are unlike the majority of early Virginia houses that they endured past 1800. Their sturdy construction and materials made these houses exceptionally resistant to various catastrophic or cumulative forces of destruction. Their generous dimensions and multiple rooms made them unusually adaptable to the changing domestic priorities of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Virginians.

At first, the forty-three Northern Neck study houses, with their demonstrably superlative qualities, suggest nothing so strongly as that eighteenth-century Virginia's domestic architecture is a subject poorly addressed through the study of surviving houses. Nevertheless, these structures are authentic remnants of the eighteenth-century countryside. While they cannot represent what was typical of colonial Virginia's housing stock, they do suggest the range of house forms and materials favored by those at the upper end of colonial Virginia society. The planters who built each of the forty-three study houses found themselves engaged in exceptionally expensive and protracted building campaigns, but they thought through and worked out their houses in the context of--and with clear references to--the pervasive trends in colonial Virginia architecture. Set amidst a landscape of small, flimsy, short-lived buildings and extensive but mundane agricultural plantings and improvements, what was the significance of a substantial, a spacious, a pretentious house?

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The most obvious way of explaining the superior architectural qualities of the forty-three Northern Neck houses is as a straightforward result of their owners's prosperity. These houses were, without exception, the seats of extraordinarily well-to-do Virginians. With a one-room plan and a form that measures about twenty by sixteen feet, the Rochester house is the smallest of all

forty-three structures, yet it was the dwelling of John Rochester who in 1782 owned 334 acres, a quantity of land that gave him standing among the wealthiest 19 percent of all Northern Neck landholders in 1782.<sup>9</sup> Rochester supplemented his agricultural profits with the considerable fees he collected as sheriff of Westmoreland County. When he died in 1794, he left a hefty estate of £792 in slaves, stock, and household goods.<sup>10</sup>

Access to wealth was undoubtedly necessary for the construction of a durable, large, or elegant dwelling, and one way to investigate the eighteenth-century circumstances and significance of the forty-three Northern Neck study houses is to sort and classify them according to their specific economic value. The formidable challenge, however, is to discover a systematic and comparable eighteenth-century assignment of worth. Assessments of house values are rare in Virginia until near the end of the eighteenth century. Beginning in the 1790s, the Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia began to insure property against fire, a process which involved estimations of the value of each covered structure. These policies, of course, were written at the discretion of an individual property owner. As a result, only seven of the forty-three Northern

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<sup>9</sup> In terms of acres owned, John Rochester was the 294th wealthiest of all 1558 landholders on the Northern Neck in 1782. Land Tax Records for Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties, 1782, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>10</sup> Inventory of John Rochester Estate, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 8, pp. 328-330. Rochester is identified as sheriff of Westmoreland County in the investigation that followed his accidental death. Sherwin McRae and Raleigh Colston, editors, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, 1794-1795 (Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1888), pp. 377-378. A photograph of the Rochester house appears in Chapter 2. See also the Rochester house entry in the catalog.

Neck houses were insured with the Mutual Assurance Society, and only one policy was written before the nineteenth century (table 1).

A second potential measure of a dwelling's worth is what it cost to build. Information of this sort survives among vestry records for several of Virginia's glebe houses--although not, unfortunately, for the only surviving Northern Neck glebe house in Westmoreland County's Cople Parish.<sup>11</sup> In 1702 for example, the vestry of Petsworth Parish in Gloucester County ordered the churchwarden to . . .

agree with some workmen for the buildings & ereckting of a gleebe house upon the gleebe plantation, six & thirty foot long & twenty foot wide with two outside chemneys two 8 foot square closetts plankt above & below, with two chambers above staires and the staires to goe up in the midst of the house with 3 large glass windows below stair each to have 3 double lights in them with a glass window in each chamber above staires each to have 3 lights in them & each closett to have a window in it and each window to have 3 lights.<sup>12</sup>

Nothing further was accomplished until November of 1704 when the vestry directed the churchwardens to "draw conditions" with Ezra Cotten for the construction of a new glebe house. The vestry repeated their requirements for dimensions and rooms, adding that they wanted the "roof to be 18 inches jet" and that they were authorizing the construction of a house made entirely of wood: "framed on good white oak sills and to stand upon blocks & to be lathd with goo[d] oak lathes and shingled with good siprus shingles."

<sup>11</sup> See the entry for Cople Glebe house in the catalog.

<sup>12</sup> C. G. Chamberlayne, editor, The Vestry Book of Petsworth Parish, Gloucester County, Virginia 1677-1793 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1933), pp. 74-75.

TABLE 1: NORTHERN NECK HOUSES INSURED BY MUTUAL ASSURANCE SOCIETY

<u>HOUSE NAME</u>	<u>POLICY NUMBER</u>	<u>POLICY DATE</u>	<u>ASSESSMENT</u>
Belle Isle	574	1818	\$10,000
Bladensfield	2062	1803	\$1,200
	852	1805	\$1,000
	2338	1816	\$1,000
Kirnan	518	1801	\$1,500
Mount Airy	228	1797	\$12,000
	761	1805	\$20,000
Sabine Hall	762	1805	\$9,500
	2150	1816	\$9,500
Stratford	515	1801	\$9,000
	853	1805	\$14,000

Material for this table is drawn from the Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

This dwelling cost the vestry 3000 pounds of tobacco, which Ezra Cotton collected the following October.<sup>13</sup>

In 1772 the vestry of St. Mark's Parish in Culpeper County agreed to construct a wood-framed glebe house with dimensions similar to those required by the Petsworth vestry, but with brick underpinning beneath the sills and two brick chimneys. The vestry also intended that the glebe house should have twenty glazed windows--ten below stairs and ten set into dormers to illuminate the rooms above. The house was to be finished with such fine architectural details as cornices and wainscoting in the passage and in two of the four downstairs rooms, paneled interior doors, and "a genteel pair of stairs with scrolls bracketts in the passage." For all of this, undertaker James Slaughter was paid 17,288 pounds of tobacco.<sup>14</sup>

On occasion, the expense of Virginia house construction appears in eighteenth-century county court records. In 1747 the magistrates of Northumberland County accepted an account for the construction of a dwelling on the land of orphan William Fletcher. The house,

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<sup>13</sup> Chamberlayne, Vestry Book of Petsworth Parish, pp. 85-86. When the vestry specified an eighteen-inch "jet," they indicated their wish that the eaves of the roof extend eighteen inches past the vertical planes of the walls. Carl R. Lounsbury, editor, An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 194. This structural detail would have helped to protect the earthfast posts from collecting rainwater and was the principal reason false plates became common components of traditional frame construction in early Virginia. For the origins and characteristics of wood-framed construction, see Dell Upton, "Traditional Timber Framing," Material Culture of the Wooden Age, Brooke Hindle, editor (Tarrytown, New York: Sleepy Hollow Press, 1981), pp. 35-93.

<sup>14</sup> Vestry Book of St. Mark's Parish, Culpeper County, 1730-1843, pp. 408-408, 414, 417, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

which measured 20 by 16 feet, was built of wood planks and finished with a coat of tar. The cost of the principal construction materials--plank, tar, and nails--amounted to £2.10.8. Builder William Cox received five hundred pounds of tobacco for the construction of the house and five hundred pounds more for "tending workmen & victuals."<sup>15</sup>

Virginia planters who kept written accounts sometimes noted therein the expense of building campaigns. In 1787 Robert Carter paid £24.8.3 for the materials and carpentry necessary to erect a wood-framed tenant house on "Brent's Tract," one of his tenanted plantations in Westmoreland County. The house measured 28 by 16 feet and rested on a foundation of "cedar posts in the ground."<sup>16</sup>

While there are numerous written sources concerning the forty-three Northern Neck houses, few contain references to the actual design, construction, or cost of these houses. Plans and elevations for Menokin and its dependencies in Richmond County represent the most explicit record of the design for any Virginia dwelling built during the eighteenth century (fig. 3).<sup>17</sup> Most references to the

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<sup>15</sup> Orphan's Account for William Fletcher, 11 August 1747, Northumberland County Record Book 1743-1749, p. 232.

<sup>16</sup> Carter paid £1.10.0 "to carting materials" for the house and £22.18.3 to have the logs shaped and assembled. Account Book 1785-1792, f. 47, Robert Carter Papers, 1760-1815, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>17</sup> "Plan Menokin House & Offices," no date, Tayloe Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond Virginia. Menokin was the seat of Francis Lightfoot Lee and Rebecca Tayloe Lee, and most scholars assume that the house was built--and the drawing was made--at about the time of their marriage in 1769. John Tayloe conveyed the tract of land by deed of gift to his daughter Rebecca Tayloe Lee in 1778. An accompanying mortgage confirms that it was the land "whereon the said Francis Lightfoot Lee and Rebecca his wife now live." Tayloe to Lee, 24 September 1778, Richmond County Deed Book 14, pp. 501-502. Lee to Lee, 5 October 1778, Richmond

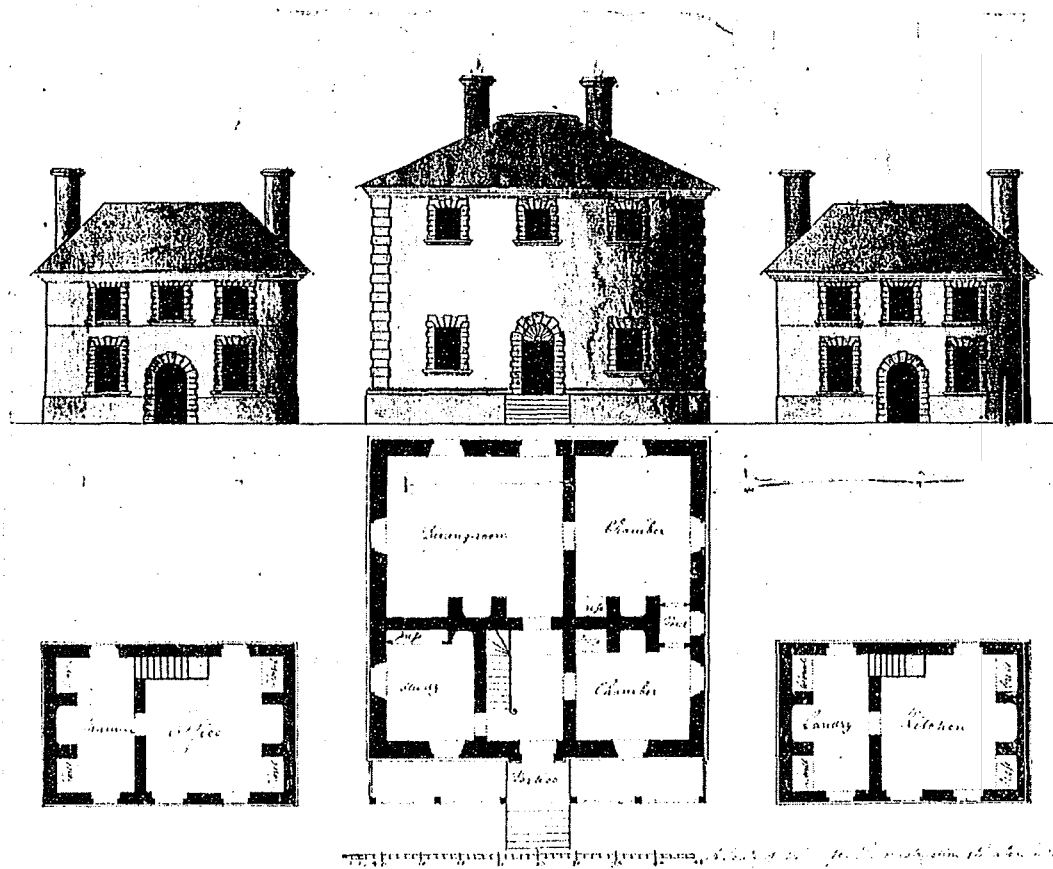


Fig. 3. Plans and Elevations, Menokin House and Dependencies, Richmond County, Virginia, about 1770. (Tayloe Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.)

planning or construction of houses are much more scattered and oblique. The initiation and completion of Verville in Lancaster County are represented by two terse entries in the diary of James Gordon (fig. 4). In 1759, Gordon noted that he "went to see the timbers carted in for the house." Three years later, he spent a day "directing John Davis to lay the flagstone for a walk."<sup>18</sup>

In a similar way, two colonial documents date the origin--if not the completion--of Mount Airy in Richmond County (fig. 5). Edmund Jennings referred in a 1754 letter to John Tayloe's "intention of building on the hill" of his Northern Neck plantation. Five years later, Tayloe recorded in his account book a payment of £200 "for my house."<sup>19</sup> Of course, the sum of £200 represented only a fraction of County Deed Book 14, p. 502. Charles E. Brownell, Calder Loth, William M. S. Rasmussen, and Richard Guy Wilson, The Making of Virginia Architecture (Richmond: Museum of Fine Arts, 1992), pp. 200-201.

<sup>18</sup> "Journal of Colonel James Gordon, of Lancaster County, Virginia, William and Mary Quarterly 1st Series, 11 (October 1902), p. 101 and (April 1903), p. 234. Early paving stones still define a path from the entrance of Verville south toward the terraces. Although the surviving brick house may not have been built until the third quarter of the eighteenth century, James Gordon was living on the site of Verville as early as 1749, when a deed by which Gordon purchased an adjacent tract referred to "the hill the sd Gordons's dwelling house stands on." John Carter to James Gordon, 12 May 1749, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 14, p. 243. Camille Wells, "National Register of Historic Places: Nomination for Verville, Lancaster County, Virginia," (Richmond: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 1986).

<sup>19</sup> Jennings to Tayloe, 9 June 1754, Edmund Jennings Letterbook, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia. Entry dated 27 October 1759, John Tayloe Account Book 1749-1768, Tayloe Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society. Both document are quoted in William M. S. Rasmussen, "Palladio in Tidewater Virginia: Mount Airy and Blandfield," Building by the Book I, Mario di Valmarana, editor (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia,





Fig. 4. Verville, Lancaster County, Virginia, about 1930. (Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Ammon G. Dunton, Jr.)



Fig. 5. Mount Airy, Richmond County, Virginia. (Photo, Carl R. Lounsbury, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.)

Mount Airy's total cost, although it may have covered the construction of the stone walls. A few years earlier, the brickwork at Carter's Grove had cost Carter Burwell £140. By the time the James City County house was completed, Burwell had spent nearly £1,300. John Tayloe's expenditures for Mount Airy surely were at least that substantial.<sup>20</sup>

It is also possible to discern from a letter the date, builder, and very local scope of construction for Bladensfield, another surviving Richmond County house (fig. 6). In 1790 Charles Jones wrote to inform Robert Carter of Nomini Hall that Carter's son-in-law John Peck "employed me to build a dwelling house and several offices." In vain had Jones "examined and searched that part of your land which you lately sold to Mr. Peck" for trees large enough to yield 12-by-10-inch sills for the house which, Jones and Peck had agreed, should measure 48 by 36 feet.<sup>21</sup> Jones thus requested that Carter "furnish trees convenient" for this building campaign.<sup>22</sup>

1984), pp. 77-78.

<sup>20</sup> Marcus Whiffen, The Eighteenth-Century Houses of Williamsburg: A Study of Architecture and Building in the Colonial Capital of Virginia (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1960; revised edition, 1984), pp. 265-267.

<sup>21</sup> When Bladensfield was completed, it actually measured 50 by 32 feet.

<sup>22</sup> Jones to Carter, 6 April 1790, Carter Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia. John Peck replaced Philip Fithian as tutor at Nomini Hall in 1774. He must have ignored Fithian's advice to "avoid visible partiality" in his dealings with the numerous Carter children, for he eventually succeeded in marrying Ann Tasker Carter. Hunter Dickinson Farish, editor, Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1965), pp. 102 and 166. In January of 1790, Robert Carter conveyed the Bladensfield tract of 797 acres to Peck. Carter to Peck, 6 January 1790, Richmond County Deed Book 16, p. 127. As Charles

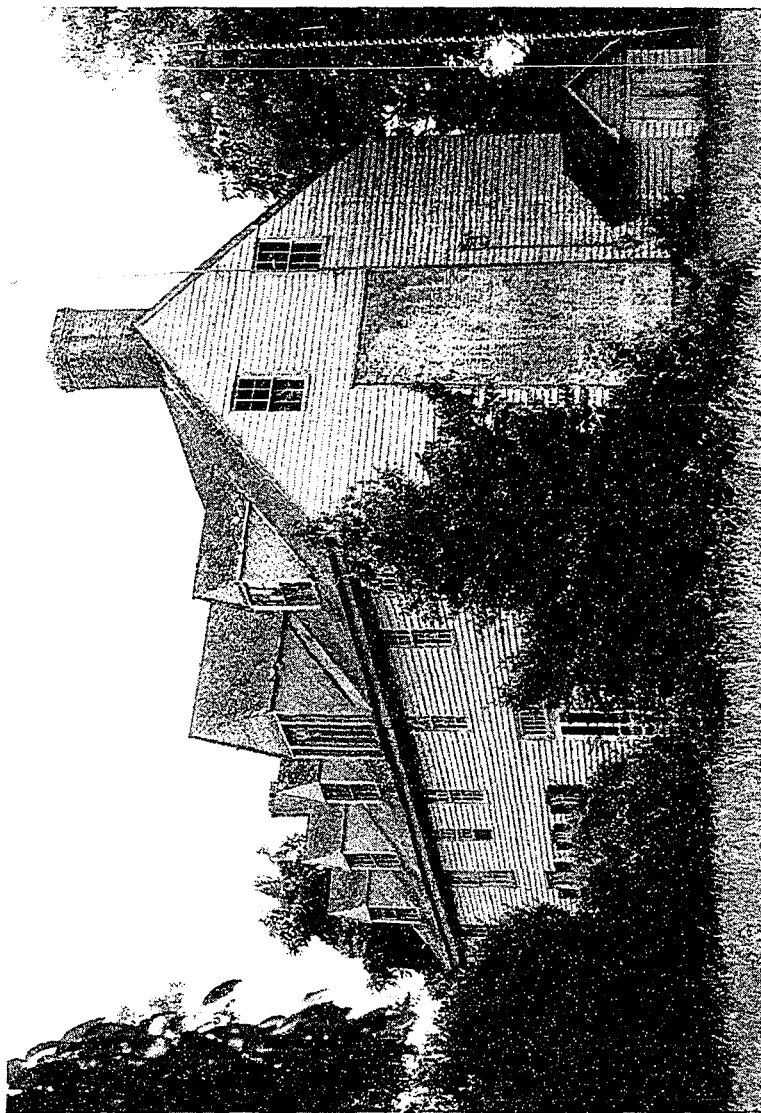


Fig. 6. Bladensfield, Richmond County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)

One reason documented construction costs are rare for eighteenth-century Virginia houses is that most building contracts, like most other transactions in the colony, were made informally and involved the exchange of goods and services rather than cash or tobacco notes. In 1789, for example, John Russell Harrison agreed to build a wood-framed dwelling that measured 22 by 24 feet on the Northumberland County plantation of Shapleigh Waddy. His responsibilities included "pay[ing] all the frate" for building materials. In return, Harrison received an eight-year lease for Waddy's hundred-acre plantation.<sup>23</sup>

Explicit valuations of eighteenth-century Virginia houses are also rare because most planters regarded buildings as improvements to--and integral components of--their land. The 1767 deed by which Henry and Lucy Lee conveyed a tract of Richmond County land to James Ball demonstrates this perception in a traditional symbolic way. The Lees dramatized their conveyance of "peaceable possession and livery of seisin" of the land to Ball "by delivery of the handle of the door of the chief mansion house thereon" in the presence of six witnesses, all of whom held tracts of adjacent land.<sup>24</sup> Since, as this passage indicates, Virginia planters thought of houses and other buildings as plantation improvements, they expected to reckon and realize the value of substantial buildings through the purchase, sale, bequest, or inheritance of their land. A comparison of land conveyances and their terms sometimes reveals a dwelling's value.

Jones's letter confirms, Peck quickly undertook the construction of the house that still stands on the property.

<sup>23</sup> Agreement of Waddy and Harrison, 2 July 1789, Northumberland County Record Book 14, p. 386. Northumberland County Land Tax Records, 1789, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>24</sup> Lee to Ball, 28 October 1767, Richmond County Deed Book 13, p. 19.

This is the case for three colonial houses on Virginia's Northern Neck.

In 1762 John Gordon of Middlesex County bought William Jordan's Richmond County plantation. James Gordon of Verville was so impressed that he recorded the event in his diary: "my brother has bought Mr. Jordan's house and plantation for £1100 which I think a very good bargain."<sup>25</sup> It was indeed a good bargain, for Jordan's plantation encompassed a thousand well improved acres. Gordon subsequently augmented the tract with the purchase of about two hundred additional acres, and then offered it all for sale in 1765.<sup>26</sup> In a Virginia Gazette advertisement, Gordon emphasized the buildings on the property. The service and agricultural buildings, impressively numerous and well built, were dominated by "a very good brick dwelling-house" which Gordon meticulously described (fig. 7). It was . . .

two story high, 52 feet by 32, with a cellar under the whole, a flush passage 12 feet wide wainscoted, and 4 rooms, viz. a hall 22 by 20 feet wainscoted, a dining room 18 by 16, a chamber 18 by 16, a study 14 by 12 wainscoted, with a closet, also four bed-chambers up stairs with fireplaces, a passage and a large closet; the whole neatly finished.<sup>27</sup>

While it is possible that Gordon's advertisement attracted no serious buyers, it is equally likely that Gordon's exceptionally detailed description reflects his growing appreciation for and attachment to the Jordan house and its surrounding conveniences. In

<sup>25</sup> Jordan to Gordon, 7 June 1762, Richmond County Deed Book 12, p. 373. "Journal of Col. James Gordon," p. 227.

<sup>26</sup> William Fauntleroy to John Gordon, 13 December 1763, Richmond County Deed Book 12, p. 557.

<sup>27</sup> Gordon advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Royle), 25 October 1765, p. 4, c. 2.

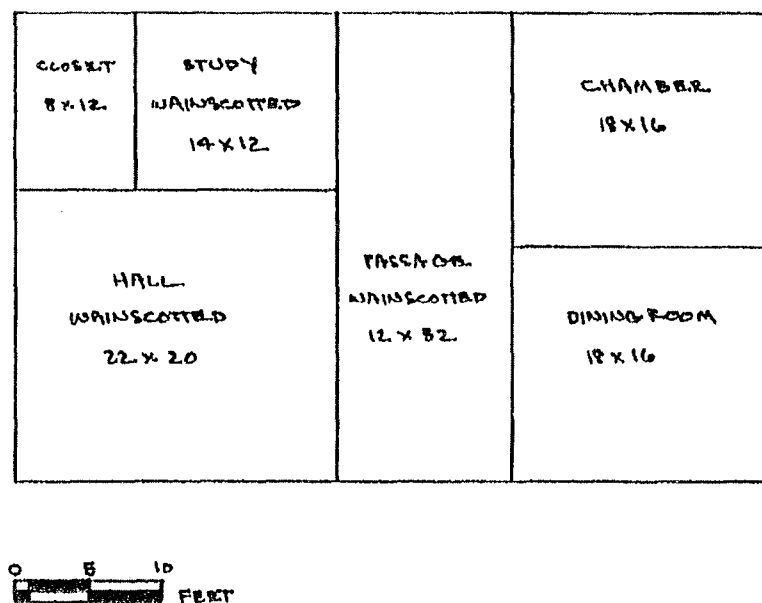


Fig. 7. Schematic Plan of the Jordan House, Richmond County, Virginia. Based on Gordon advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Royle), 25 October 1765, p. 4, c. 2. (Drawing, Camille Wells.)

either case, Gordon did not sell the Jordan property. He made it his dwelling plantation and apparently lived there for the rest of his life.<sup>28</sup>

In 1787 Gordon's widow sold the entire Jordan plantation to her Richmond County neighbor Thomas Beale. Unlike Gordon, who had bought the tract at the "bargain" price of £1100, Beale paid the Gordons only £400 for his purchase.<sup>29</sup> Apparently Beale was able to strike such an agreement because the big brick house had been destroyed in a fire. Significantly, when Beale bequeathed the land to his son, he referred to it not as "Jordan's plantation" nor as "land I bought of Gordon" but as "burnthouse tract."<sup>30</sup> It is thus possible to reckon the value of Jordan's imposing two-story brick house with the generous rooms and the elegant woodwork at roughly £700--or £0.15.7 per acre as an improvement to his Richmond County plantation (table 2).

In 1786 Rawleigh William Downman sold his 940-acre Richmond County plantation to John Chinn for £1275. Just three weeks later he purchased a tract of 920 acres in Lancaster County for £4000.<sup>31</sup> What Downman gained through this pair of transactions was neither better soil nor an improved location: both tracts encompassed numerous acres of rich low ground and both were sited on navigable creeks near their confluence with the Rappahannock River (fig. 8). What Downman gained--and what accounted for the difference

<sup>28</sup> By 1763 John Gordon was identified as a resident of Richmond County. Fauntleroy to Gordon, p. 557.

<sup>29</sup> Lucy Gordon to Thomas Beale, 4 May 1787, Richmond County Deed Book 15, p. 261.

<sup>30</sup> Will of Thomas Beale, 7 June 1799, Richmond County Will Book 9, pp. 123-124.

<sup>31</sup> Downman to Chinn, 3 February 1786, Richmond County Deed Book 15, p. 211. Nathaniel Burwell to Rawleigh William Downman, 27 February 1786, Lancaster County Deed Book 21, ff. 61-62.



TABLE 2: SUBSTANTIAL HOUSING AND NORTHERN NECK LAND VALUES

<u>SITE</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>TOTAL PRICE</u>	<u>PRICE/ ACRE</u>
Jordan plantation [before house fire]	1762	1000	£1100	£1.2.0
Jordan's plantation [after house fire]	1787	1250	£400	£0.6.5
			-----	-----
VALUE OF THE HOUSE:			£700*	£0.15.7*
Belle Isle [standing brick house]	1786	920	£4000	£4.7.0
Edgehill [largely unimproved]	1786	940	£1275	£1.7.2
			-----	-----
VALUE OF THE HOUSE:			£2725	£2.19.10

\*The contrast in the prices paid for the Jordan plantation would be even more pronounced if the post-fire figures were adjusted to diminish the effects of Revolutionary War-era inflation.

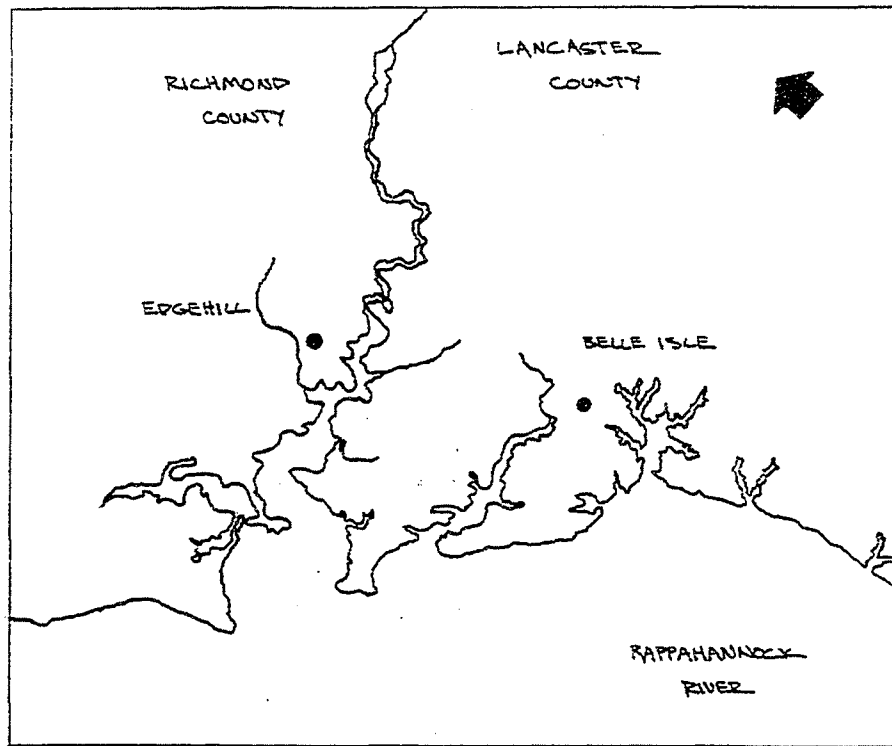


Fig. 8. Map Showing Locations of Edgehill in Richmond County and Belle Isle in Lancaster County, Virginia. (Drawing, Camille Wells.)

between two quite similar tracts of land--was Belle Isle.<sup>32</sup> This genteel two-story brick house increased the value of Downman's new plantation by £2725--or by about £3 per acre (table 2).

In 1791 John Chinn bequeathed the Richmond County tract he had bought from Downman to his son. John Yates Chinn had paid successful court to Sarah Fairfax Carter of Nomini Hall, and he probably used a substantial Carter dowry to build an elegant new house that rivaled nearby Belle Isle in size and finish (fig. 9).<sup>33</sup> In 1815, when a new law authorized an unprecedented and never-repeated tax on houses worth more than \$500, local assessors thought the two houses were roughly equal in quality. They valued Downman's Belle Isle at \$2300, while Chinn's Edgehill was considered worth \$2000.<sup>34</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Deeds, contracts, insurance policies, vestry records, plantation accounts, and personal papers all are useful in determining a kind of

<sup>32</sup> As the conveyances to and from Downman make clear, the Lancaster County tract was bounded in part by Deep Creek and the Rappahannock River. The Richmond County tract bordered on Morattico Creek just northeast of its confluence with the Rappahannock River. Belle Isle is discussed and illustrated in Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>33</sup> Will of John Chinn, 16 January 1791, Lancaster County Will Book 22, p. 147. Sarah Carter's marriage to John Yates Chinn was acknowledged in the settlement of her father's estate. "Record of the Valuation and Division of Robert Carter's Land," 23 December 1815, Robert Carter Papers, 1760-1815, Virginia Historical Society. The importance of dowries as a means of financing expensive building campaigns is discussed in Barbara Burlison Mooney, "True worth is highly shown in liveing well": Architectural Patronage in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," (Ph. D. Dissertation: University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 1991), v. 1, pp. 163-166.

<sup>34</sup> Personal Property Tax Lists for Lancaster County and Richmond County, 1815, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

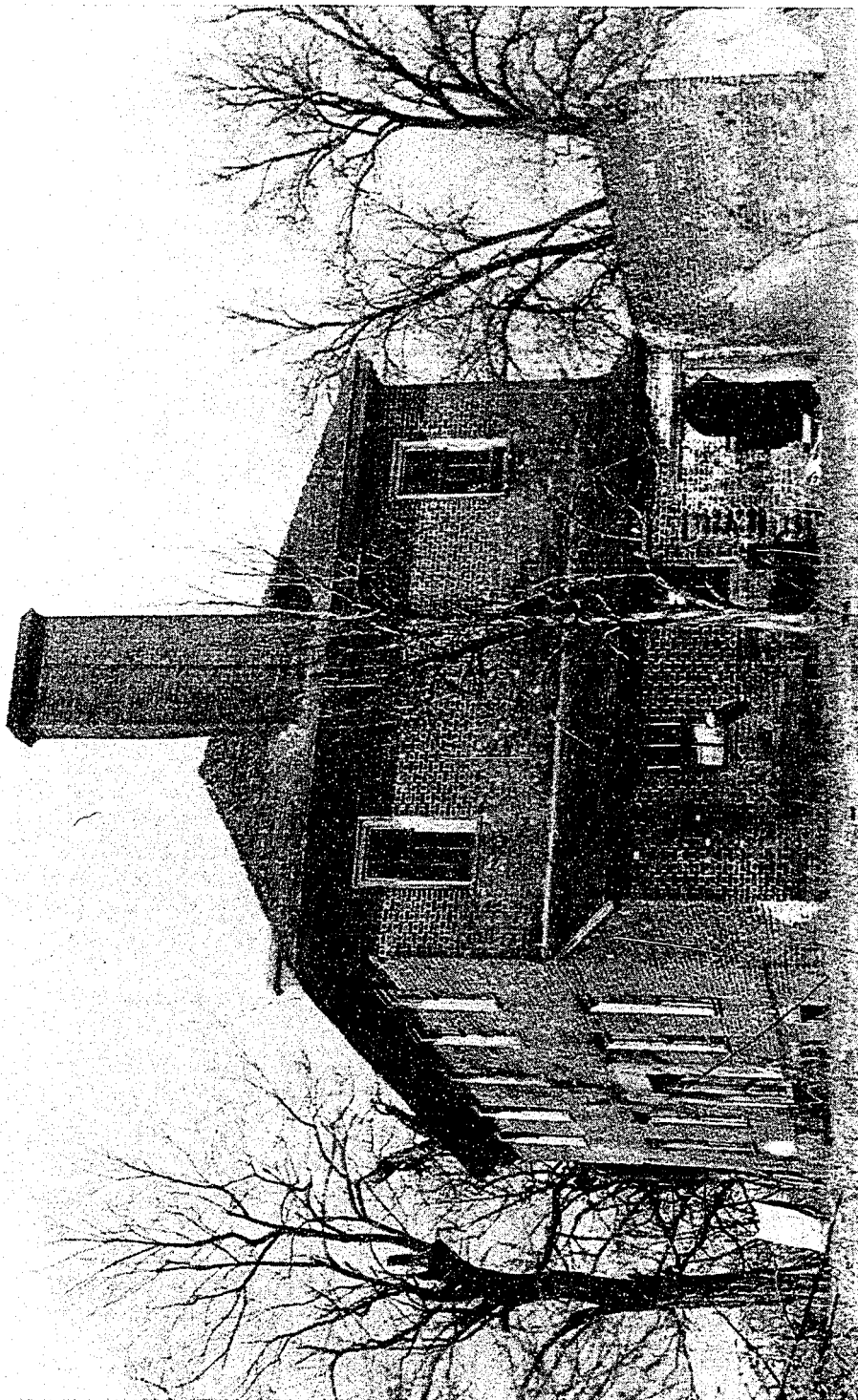


Fig. 9. Edgehill, Richmond County, Virginia, about 1937. (G. B. Lorraine Papers, Virginia State Library and Archives.)

value, directly or by analogy, for several of the Northern Neck study houses, but they do not supply the means of establishing a comparable value or a defensible rank for all forty-three structures. One way to accomplish this task is to discover for each house the wealth of its owner in a single year. Land taxes, which replaced colonial Virginia's system of quitrents during the 1780s, offer just such a consistent and comparable measure of wealth. Of course, a planter's economic standing does not correspond literally with the number of acres he owned. Nevertheless, for an economy in which land was the crucial productive resource as well as a common means of amassing and distributing wealth, landholding represents one significant indicator of a planter's means--and one defensible opportunity to correlate the characteristics of the forty-three study houses with their owners's economic standing.<sup>35</sup>

Because the systematic taxing of all Virginia landholders began in 1782, that is the first year for which it is possible to associate a sum of acres with each of the forty-three houses.<sup>36</sup> This sum of

<sup>35</sup> Scholars have considered landholding to be a significant indicator of wealth in colonial Virginia since Jackson Turner Main wrote a discussion of the one hundred wealthiest planters in early national Virginia and Robert and Katherine Brown used landholding to argue that colonial Virginia was an economically democratic society. Most recently, a group of social historians have used landholding as one means of sorting seventeenth-century colonists on the lower western shore of Maryland into comprehensible social and economic groups. See Jackson Turner Main, "The One Hundred," William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series, 11 (July 1954), pp. 354-384; Robert E. Brown and B. Katherine Brown, Virginia 1705-1786: Democracy or Aristocracy? (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964), pp. 7-31; Lois Green Carr, Russell R. Menard, and Lorena S. Walsh, Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 3-28.

<sup>36</sup> Especially in the beginning, the tax collector's treatment of

acres, in turn, offers one way to "rank" each of the houses according to the wealth of their owners. In 1782 for example, Robert Gilmour of Lancaster County paid taxes on eleven hundred acres. Thus he stood, in terms of landed wealth, between Molly Hodge, who paid taxes on 1261 acres in Westmoreland County, and James Gordon, who paid taxes on 1052 acres in Lancaster County. In architectural terms, this hierarchy of acreage means that Robert Gilmour's house Belmont ranks just below Molly Hodge's Twiford and just above James Gordon's Verville (table 3).<sup>37</sup>

This sort of economic differentiation indicates who among the four eastern counties of the Northern Neck each planter may have recognized as a peer. The eighteenth-century diaries of Philip Fithian and Landon Carter confirm what the ranking of house owners by their landholdings suggest: that the social connections among the Lee, Tayloe, and Carter families were numerous and strong. During his tenure as tutor for Robert Carter's family in Westmoreland County, Fithian recorded frequent cordial visits back and forth between Nomini Hall, Stratford, and Mount Airy.<sup>38</sup> In 1774 Landon Carter mentioned a longstanding connection between his household rented land was variable. Thus a planter who had organized land into tenanted parcels might be taxed for significantly fewer acres than he or she actually owned. From 1782 to 1789, Alice Smith of Monaskon in Lancaster County paid taxes on between 726 and 1026 acres. The variable acreage was a result of her annual decisions to rent to neighboring planters parcels of between one and three hundred acres. Lancaster County Land Tax Lists, 1782-1789, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>37</sup> This and all subsequent information concerning the landholdings of Northern Neck planters is drawn from the Land Tax Lists for Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties, 1782, Virginia State Library and Archives.

<sup>38</sup> Farish, editor, Journal and Letters of Fithian, especially pp. 34, 87, 94-95, and 121.

TABLE 3: NORTHERN NECK HOUSES, OWNERS, AND LANDHOLDINGS IN 1782

<u>HOUSE</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>OWNER</u>	<u>ACRES*</u>
Belle Isle	Lancaster	Nathaniel Burwell	1045
Belmont	Lancaster	Robert Gilmour	1100
Bladensfield	Richmond	Robert Carter for John Peck	797
Blenheim	Westmoreland	William Augustine Washington	2295
Chantilly	Westmoreland	Richard Henry Lee	500
Claughton House	Northumberland	Pemberton Claughton	354
Clifton	Northumberland	Landon Carter II	2200
Cople Glebe House	Westmoreland	Thomas Smith	516
Cox House	Northumberland	Peter Cox	461
Currioman	Westmoreland	Thomas Chilton Estate	1313
Ditchley	Northumberland	Elizabeth and William Lee	975
Edgehill	Richmond	Rawleigh William Downman	930
Elba	Westmoreland	Fleet Cox	2080
Grove Mount	Richmond	Robert Mitchell	1685
Hague	Westmoreland	John Hague	250
Huntos	Lancaster	William Newby	206
Hurstville	Lancaster	Thomas Hurst	200
Indian Banks	Richmond	Richard Glascock	250
Kirnan	Westmoreland	George Garner	762
Linden Farm	Richmond	Edward Saunders	500
Menokin	Richmond	Francis Lightfoot Lee	1000
Merry Point	Lancaster	John Davis	100
Millenbeck	Lancaster	William Ball	600
Monaskon	Lancaster	Alice Smith	1026
Monroe House	Westmoreland	Gawin Corbin	400
Morattico	Lancaster	Rawleigh Downman Estate	1830
Mount Airy	Richmond	John Tayloe Estate	2916
Mount Zion	Northumberland	Thomas Jones	695
Oakley	Lancaster	John Chinn	1722
Paynes Shop	Lancaster	John Payne	153
Peckatone	Westmoreland	George Turberville	1478
Popes Creek	Westmoreland	William Augustine Washington	2295
Roadview	Northumberland	Isaac Hurst	100
Rochester House	Westmoreland	John Rochester	334
Sabine Hall	Richmond	Robert Wormeley Carter	2725
Shearmans Ferry	Lancaster	Rawleigh Shearman	469

Stratford	Westmoreland	Philip Ludwell Lee Estate	3454
Towles Point	Lancaster	Henry Towles	485
Twiford	Westmoreland	Molly Hodge	1261
Verville	Lancaster	James Gordon	1052
Walnut Hill	Westmoreland	Thomas Jett	1454
Wilton	Westmoreland	Richard Jackson	500
Woodford	Richmond	William McCarty	500

\*This figure represents the total number of acres for which the owner of each house paid taxes in 1782 and not necessarily the size of the tract on which the house was located.



and that of his neighbor John Tayloe. He wrote . . .

This day we most of us dine at Mt. Airy, it having been the custom to finish the old year at one house and begin the new year at the other, that is, the last December at Mt. Airy and the 1st January at the [Sabine] Hall.<sup>39</sup>

Of course, such ties were not confined to the Northern Neck's wealthiest planters. The public records of Northumberland County demonstrate, for example, that the Claughtons and Coxes were not only neighbors and economic equals. They were also linked by bonds of marriage and friendship.<sup>40</sup>

In architectural terms, a ranking of houses by landownership can indicate the most fundamental reason why some of the Northern Neck study houses are bigger and better than others. Edgehill, to cite one case, is larger and more expensively constructed than Merry Point because John Chinn was richer than John Davis (figs. 9 and 10). This correlation of acreage and housing characteristics also works in a less mechanical, more substantial way to suggest what kinds of houses were available to--or favored by--planters of different means. It can also reveal the range of variation that existed among the houses of planters with apparently similar levels of wealth. When, for each of the Northern Neck study houses, a series of architectural features are sorted according to the landed estate of

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<sup>39</sup> Jack P. Greene, editor, The Diary of Colonel Landon Carter of Sabine Hall 1752-1778 (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1965), v. 2, p. 907.

<sup>40</sup> In 1786 for example, Peter Cox sold to William Claughton a parcel of land in Cherry Point Neck, where they both lived. Cox to Claughton, 14 August 1786, Northumberland County Record Book 13, pp. 279-281. In 1789 Mary Cox named members of the Claughton family as among her grandchildren. Will of Mary Cox, 7 January 1789, Northumberland County Record Book 14, pp. 233-237. Carolyn Jett kindly supplied these references.



Fig. 10. Merry Point, Lancaster County, Virginia, about 1930. (G. B. Lorraine Papers, Virginia State Library and Archives.)

its owner, certain relationships between wealth and housing emerge (table 4). Some of the patterns seem commonsensible, but there are a few intriguing discrepancies as well.

Construction material is one architectural component that was connected to wealth in early Virginia. All of the masonry houses appear to cluster toward the upper ranks of landholding. Indeed, among those thirty planters whose landholdings equalled or exceeded five hundred acres, half dwelt in brick or stone houses. The true significance of this fact, however, may be that half of these thirty planters dwelt in wood-framed houses. Allowing for a survival rate that is surely skewed--perhaps dramatically so--in favor of masonry houses, it appears that even the Northern Neck's wealthiest planters preferred wooden dwellings.<sup>41</sup> The more defensible conclusion, where construction material is concerned, is that a brick house was usually beyond the means of colonial Virginians who owned less than five hundred acres.

There is a similar correlation between landed wealth and dwelling mass. Sixteen of the seventeen two-story houses belonged to planters who owned at least five hundred acres, and two-room depth was also common only among the houses of planters whose landed wealth amounted to five hundred acres or more. By contrast, all but six of the forty-three study houses were planned with some provision for separating circulation from living space. This trend suggests the widespread acceptance, among affluent eighteenth-century Virginians, of a housing device that emerged toward the end of the seventeenth century, when it first became clear to Virginia planters that successful tobacco cultivation involved a numerous and hard-driven labor force. Planters began to build separate quarters in order to distance themselves physically and socially

<sup>41</sup> For more on the skewness of the survival rate among early Chesapeake houses, see Chapter 2.

TABLE 4: NORTHERN NECK LANDHOLDING AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

<u>HOUSE</u> <u>NAME</u>	<u>ACRES</u> <u>IN 1782*</u>	<u>MASONRY</u> <u>FABRIC</u>	<u>TWO</u> <u>STORIES</u>	<u>PASSAGE</u> <u>OR ENTRY</u>	<u>TWO-ROOM</u> <u>DEPTH**</u>
Stratford	3454	x	x	x	x
Mount Airy	2916	x	x	x	x
Sabine Hall	2725	x	x	x	x
Blenheim	2295	x	x	x	-
Popes Creek	2295	-	-	x	-
Clifton	2200	-	x	x	-
Elba	2080	x	-	x	-
Morattico	1830	-	-	x	?
Oakley	1722	-	-	x	-
Grove Mount	1685	-	x	x	x
Peckatone	1478	x	x	x	x
Walnut Hill	1454	-	-	x	x
Currioman	1313	x	-	x	?
Twiford	1261	-	-	x	x
Belmont	1100	-	-	x	x
Verville	1052	x	-	x	-
Belle Isle	1045	x	x	x	x
Monaskon	1026	-	x	x	x
Menokin	1000	x	x	x	x
Ditchley	975	x	x	x	x
Edgehill	930	x	x	x	x
Bladensfield	797	-	x	x	x
Kirnan	762	-	-	x	x
Mount Zion	695	-	-	-	-
Millenbeck	600	-	-	x	-
Cople Glebe House	516	x	x	x	-
Wilton	500	x	x	x	x
Woodford	500	x	-	x	-
Linden Farm	500	-	-	x	x
Chantilly	500	-	x	x	x
Towles Point	485	-	-	x	-
Shearmans Ferry	469	-	-	-	-
Cox House	461	-	-	x	-
Monroe House	400	-	-	x	-
Claughton House	354	-	-	-	-
Rochester House	334	-	-	-	-
Indian Banks	250	x	x	x	x

Hague	250	-	-	x	-
Hunttons	206	-	-	-	-
Hurstville	200	-	-	x	x
Paynes Shop	153	-	-	x	-
Roadview	100	-	-	x	-
Merry Point	100	-	-	-	-

\*This figure represents the total number of acres for which the owner of each house paid taxes in 1782 and not necessarily the size of the tract on which the house was located.

\*\*The object of this category is to distinguish houses with plans of at least three rooms that are organized in something other than a plain single-file arrangement. It does not include houses with two-room plans that are oriented so that one room is positioned behind, rather than beside, the other.

from the indentured servants and slaves who formerly had enjoyed access to their masters's dwellings. Virginians also began to construct houses with passages or--less often--entries that insured for every room both privacy and accessibility to service.<sup>42</sup> It is significant that Mount Zion, the highest-ranking study house built without a passage or entry, was not a landowning planter's house but a tenement or auxiliary dwelling (fig. 11).<sup>43</sup> Four of the six study houses that contain no interior provisions for circulation were built with separate entrances to each principal room. In this way, the yards of Mount Zion, the Claughton house, Huntons, and Merry Point served the same buffering and segregating function as entries and passages.

By the second half of the eighteenth century, Virginia planters who could afford to build capacious houses with numerous rooms and multiple stories often planned and embellished their passages as living space as well as social buffering and segregating devices. At

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<sup>42</sup> The architectural alienation of labor in colonial Virginia and the origin and function of the Virginia passage have been discussed in three important essays. They are Cary Carson, "Doing History with Material Culture," Material Culture and the Study of American Life, Ian M. G. Quimby, editor, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), pp. 41-64; Fraser D. Neiman, "Domestic Architecture at the Clifts Plantation: The Social Context of Early Virginia Building," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 28 (December 1978) pp. 3096-3128, reprinted in Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, editors, Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), pp. 292-314; Dell Upton, "The Origins of Chesapeake Architecture," Three Centuries of Maryland Architecture (Annapolis: Maryland Historical Trust, 1982), pp. 44-57.

<sup>43</sup> About a hundred yards south of this two-room house is the elevated site where stood, during the eighteenth century, the dwelling house of Thomas Jones and his family. Mount Zion tenement is the only remnant of this colonial Northumberland County plantation. A plan of this dwelling appears in Chapter 2.

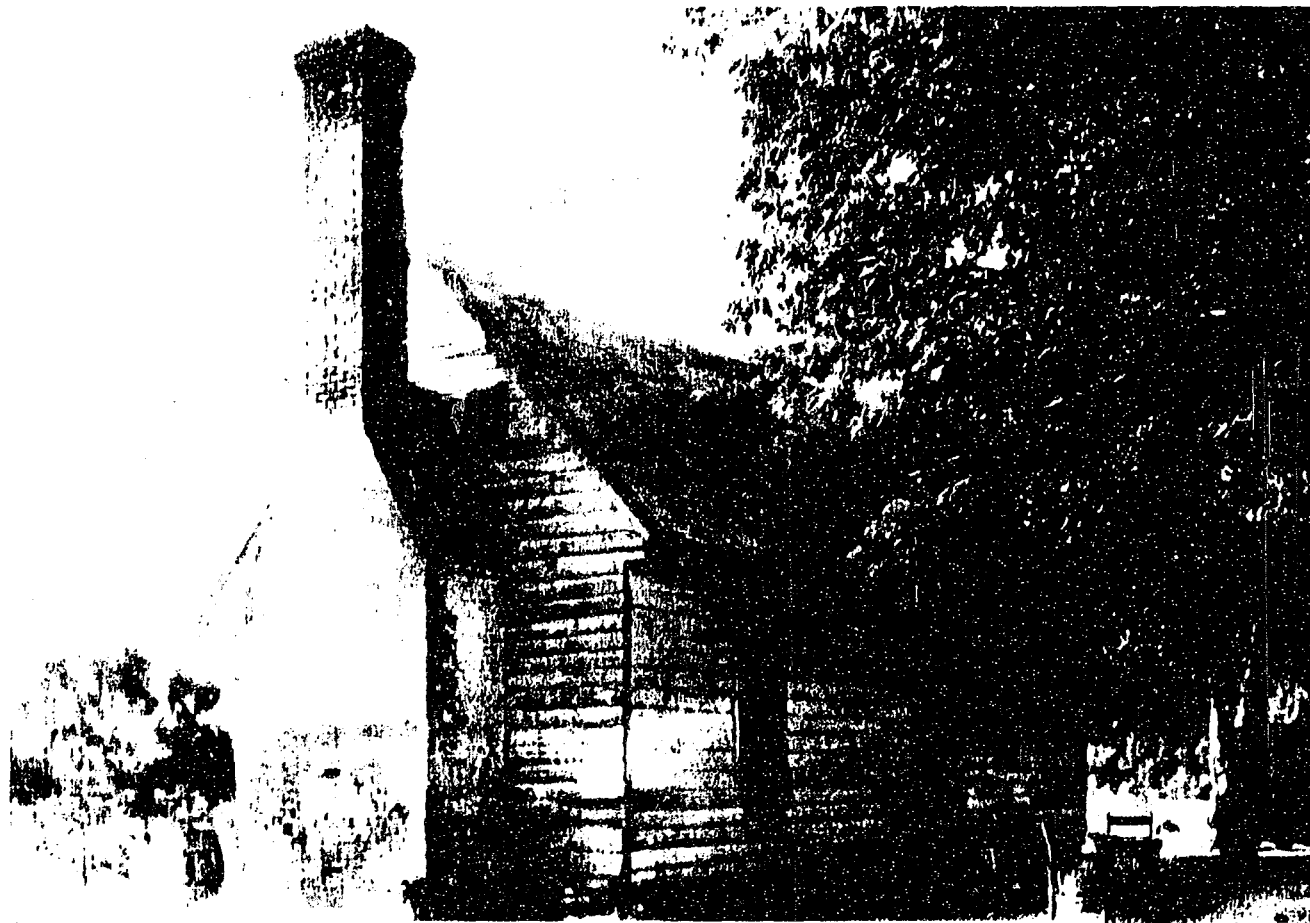


Fig. 11. Mount Zion Tenement, Northumberland County, Virginia, about 1930. (Virginia State Library and Archives.)

Sabine Hall in Richmond County, Landon Carter kept a substantial portion of his library in bookcases that lined the walls of his passage (fig. 12).<sup>44</sup> During his later years, Carter also used the passage for exercise--he wrote of walking back and forth for a cumulative distance of half a mile.<sup>45</sup> That Carter and his family also used the Sabine Hall passage as a sitting room during hot weather is suggested by a letter in which William Lee promised Carter "a line to repose on in a hot afternoon in the cool passage."<sup>46</sup> Philip Fithian confirmed a similar use of space at Peckatone and Mount Airy during the hot summer months. In July of 1774, Fithian and Ben Carter paid a visit to the Turbervilles of Peckatone. After a round of introductions, everyone "took our seats in a cool passage." During the following month, Fithian and Carter called at Mount Airy, where "the young ladies we found in the hall playing the harpsicord."<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps the clearest relationship between eighteenth-century housing and wealth emerges from a juxtaposition of acreage and

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<sup>44</sup> Inventory of Landon Carter Estate, February, 1779, Sabine Hall Collection, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia. The presence, in addition to the bookcases, of a writing table in the passage suggests that Carter sometimes worked in this space.

<sup>45</sup> Greene, editor, Diary of Landon Carter, v. 2, p. 1087.

<sup>46</sup> William Lee to Landon Carter, 19 May 1775, William Lee Letterbook, Virginia Historical Society, quoted in William M. S. Rasmussen, "Sabine Hall: A Classical Villa in Virginia," (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Delaware, 1979), p. 132.

<sup>47</sup> Farish, editor, Journal and Letters of Fithian, pp. 130 and 152. The most authoritative discussion of the passage and its role in the domestic and social life of eighteenth-century Virginia is Mark R. Wenger's essay "The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Space," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture II, Camille Wells, editor, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), pp. 137-149.



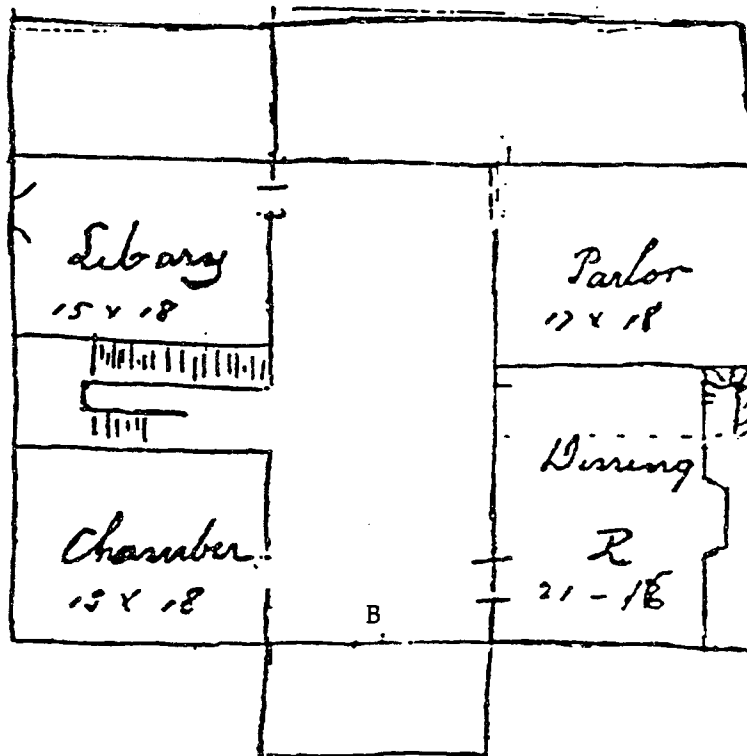


Fig. 12. Sketch Plan of Sabine Hall, Richmond County, Virginia.  
(Sabine Hall Collection, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.)

square footage (table 5 and fig. 13). With 3454 acres, Philip Ludwell Lee's estate was the fifth-largest landholding on the Northern Neck of Virginia and the largest landholding of any associated with a standing eighteenth-century house.<sup>48</sup> There is a kind of architectural logic to this: encompassing 3454 square feet, Stratford is not only the largest of the forty-three study houses, it is also the largest of all surviving eighteenth-century houses in Virginia.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, it is no surprise that John Tayloe and Robert Wormeley Carter were the second and third largest Northern Neck landowners in 1782, for in terms of size, construction, and quality of finish, Mount Airy and Sabine Hall were among the grandest houses in all of colonial Virginia.

A direct correlation between landholding and house size is also discernible near the opposite end of the scale. John Rochester's 334 acres is among the smallest of all forty-three landholdings, and with a footprint of 320 square feet, his one-room dwelling is the smallest of all forty-three study houses. Positioned just above

<sup>48</sup> Stratford could not maintain its premier position among the forty-three study houses if Nomini Hall had survived or were better documented. In 1782 Robert Carter of Nomini Hall owned 7333 acres in Westmoreland County alone. In a letter to an official of the new commonwealth of Virginia, Carter wrote that he owned 15,600 acres in Westmoreland and Richmond Counties. Letter quoted in J. Motley Booker, "Robert Carter of Nomini Hall: Abstracts from Letters, 1774-1784," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 16 (December 1966), p. 1513. Jackson Turner Main's analysis of land tax records in 1787 and 1788 reveals that Carter owned a total of 21,316 acres of land distributed among nine Tidewater, Piedmont, and Valley counties of Virginia's Northern Neck. Main, "The One Hundred," p. 372.

<sup>49</sup> This and following calculations of square feet are based on exterior ground dimensions and not on actual interior floor space, which would be reduced by the thickness of walls and increased by the presence of one or more rooms above stairs.

TABLE 5: NORTHERN NECK LANDHOLDING AND HOUSE SIZE

<u>HOUSE NAME</u>	<u>ACRES IN 1782*</u>	<u>SQUARE FEET**</u>	<u>LENGTH/WIDTH</u>
Stratford	3454	5012	93 x 62
Mount Airy	2916	2820	60 x 47
Sabine Hall	2725	2400	60 x 40
Blenheim	2295	840	42 x 20
Popes Creek	2295	1678	58 x 37***
Clifton	2200	1200	40 x 30
Elba	2080	774	43 x 18
Morattico	1830	unknown	unknown
Oakley	1722	1790	67 x 48***
Grove Mount	1685	1542	51 x 38***
Peckatone	1478	unknown	unknown
Walnut Hill	1454	1305	45 x 29
Currioman	1313	unknown	unknown
Twiford	1261	1815	55 x 33
Belmont	1100	unknown	unknown
Verville	1052	1800	50 x 36
Belle Isle	1045	1280	40 x 32
Monaskon	1026	1431	53 x 27
Menokin	1000	1720	43 x 40
Ditchley	975	1155	55 x 21
Edgehill	930	unknown	unknown
Bladensfield	797	1600	50 x 32
Kirnan	762	1092	42 x 26
Mount Zion	695	528	33 x 16
Millenbeck	600	855	57 x 15
Cople Glebe House	516	1659	79 x 21
Wilton	500	1485	55 x 27
Woodford	500	861	41 x 21
Linden Farm	500	1215	45 x 27
Chantilly	500	2053	73 x 31***
Towles Point	485	702	39 x 18
Shearmans Ferry	469	651	31 x 21
Cox House	461	576	24 x 24
Monroe House	400	608	38 x 16
Claughton House	354	576	24 x 24
Rochester House	334	320	20 x 16
Indian Banks	250	1390	49 x 40***
Hague	250	666	37 x 18

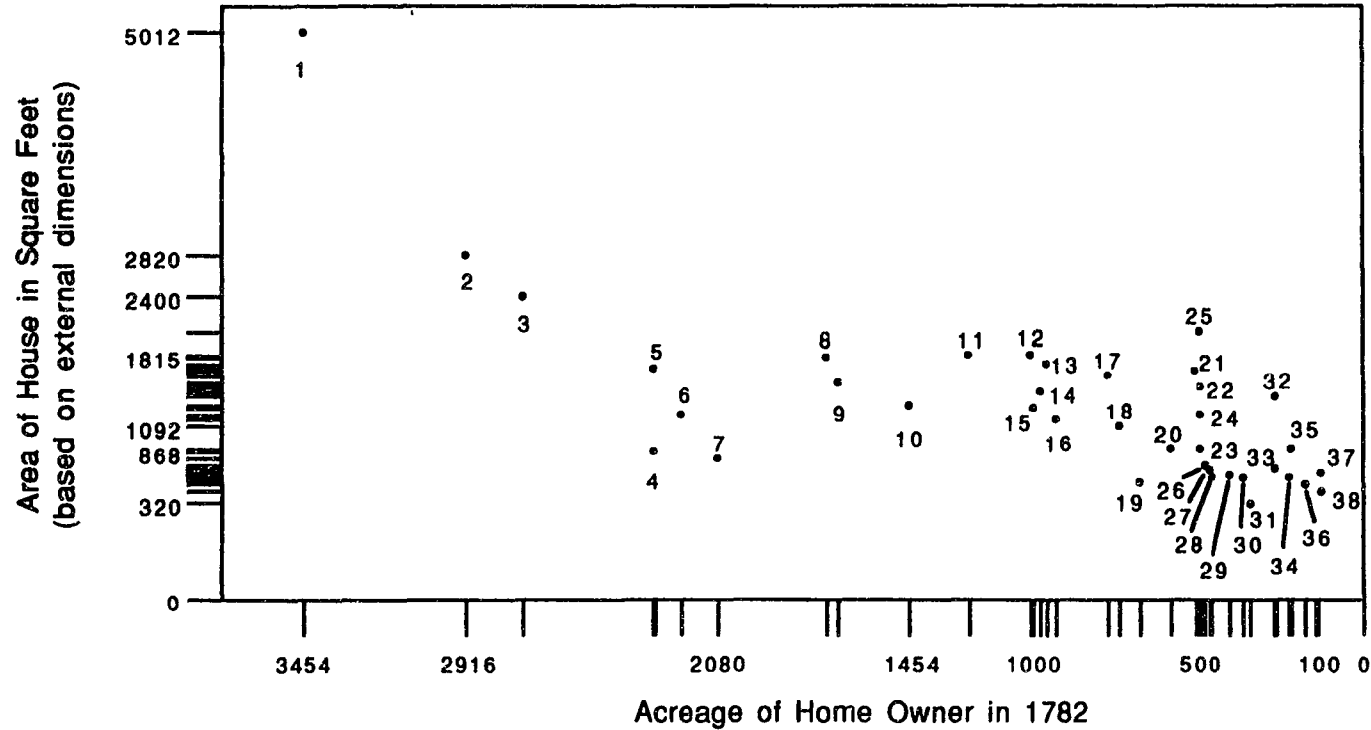
Hunttons	206	580	20 x 29
Hurstville	200	868	31 x 28
Paynes Shop	153	512	32 x 16
Roadview	100	625	25 x 25
Merry Point	100	448	28 x 16

\*This figure represents the total number of acres for which the owner of each house paid taxes in 1782 and not necessarily the size of the tract on which the house was located.

\*\*This figure represents the size of each dwelling's "footprint" rather than the total area of available floorspace within.

\*\*\*These dimensions represent the structure's overall length and width rather than its actual H-, U-, or L-shaped enclosure of space.

Fig. 13. House Area Compared to Landholding



- |                |                 |                       |                     |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Stratford   | 9. Grove Mount  | 17. Bladensfield      | 25. Chantilly       | 33. Hague       |
| 2. Mount Airy  | 10. Walnut Hill | 18. Kirnan            | 26. Towles Point    | 34. Hunttons    |
| 3. Sabine Hall | 11. Twiford     | 19. Mount Zion        | 27. Shearmans Ferry | 35. Hurstville  |
| 4. Blenheim    | 12. Verville    | 20. Millenbeck        | 28. Cox House       | 36. Payne Shop  |
| 5. Popes Creek | 13. Belle Isle  | 21. Cople Glebe House | 29. Monroe House    | 37. Roadview    |
| 6. Clifton     | 14. Monaskon    | 22. Wilton            | 30. Cloughton House | 38. Merry Point |
| 7. Elba        | 15. Menokin     | 23. Woodford          | 31. Rochester House |                 |
| 8. Oakley      | 16. Ditchley    | 24. Linden Farm       | 32. Indian Banks    |                 |

Rochester, both in terms of landed wealth and house size is William Claughton, with his landholding of 354 acres and his house of 576 square feet. Next up in the hierarchy is Gawin Corbin who paid taxes on four hundred acres and dwelt in a house that enclosed about 608 square feet.<sup>50</sup> Peter Cox, who owned 461 acres, stands in landed wealth just above Corbin, but his house was smaller--roughly the size of William Claughton's.<sup>51</sup> A landholding of 469 acres places Rawleigh Shearman just above Rochester, Claughton, and Cox. His house at Shearmans Ferry was also a little larger--it enclosed 651 square feet (fig. 14). Next in rank was Henry Towles of Towles Point, who paid taxes on 485 acres and lived in a house with a correspondingly larger area of 702 square feet.

This sequence of six Northern Neck planters, landholdings, and houses suggests a very clear relationship between wealth and dwelling size: the greater a planter's landholding, the larger his house. Nevertheless, the full range of forty-three study houses, sorted according to associated acreage and area, include juxtapositions that are not so tidy. The documentary record of individual planters and plantations can explain some of these

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<sup>50</sup> This house was built by Spence Monroe in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Though it does not survive, it is remembered--and during the 1970s, was excavated--as the birthplace of President James Monroe. See Keith Egloff and Martha McCartney, "Excavations at the James Monroe Birthplace," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 31 (December 1981), pp. 3483-3496 and the Monroe house entry in the catalog. If the Gawin Corbin who owned this site in 1782 is the same Gawin Corbin who owned substantial tracts of land in Caroline and Spotsylvania Counties, then the Monroe house, like the dwelling at Mount Zion, was a tenement that does not figure fairly in this ranking of landed wealth and dwelling size. Main, "The One Hundred," p. 374.

<sup>51</sup> The Cox house is pictured in Chapter 3. Because the house recently was demolished, its dimensions are estimated from surviving photographs.

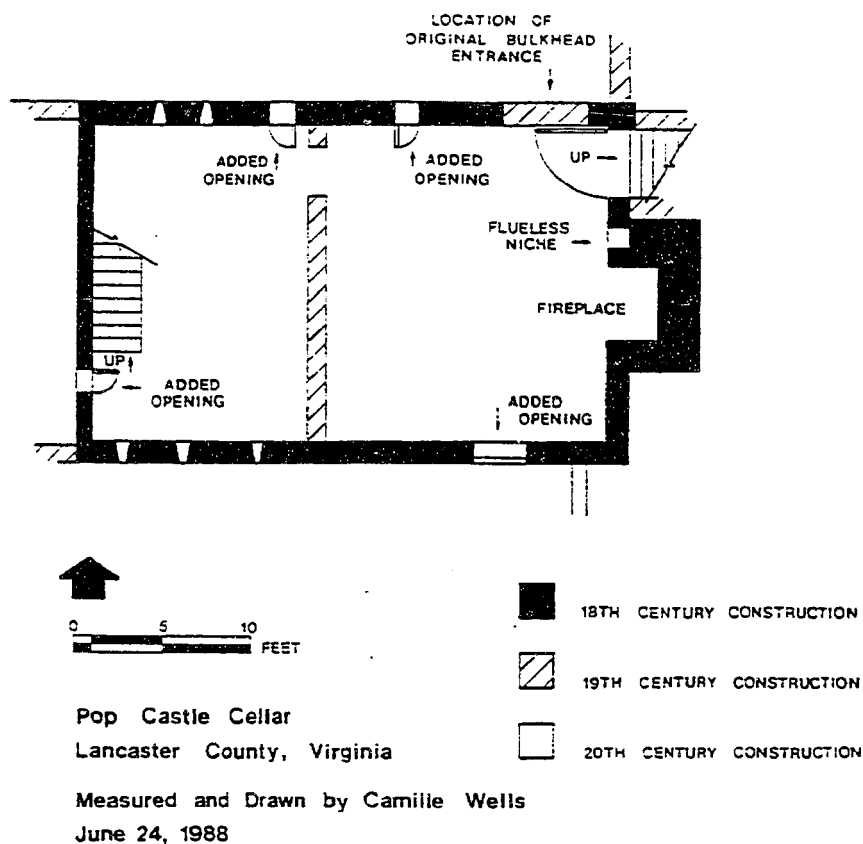


Fig. 14. Plan of Shearmans Ferry Cellar, Lancaster County, Virginia.  
(Drawing, Camille Wells.)

discrepancies. An obvious example is Mount Zion, with its 528 square feet. It holds an inappropriately high position among the study houses, for it was a secondary dwelling on the Jones plantation and not in fact the abode of owner Thomas Jones himself.<sup>52</sup> With a footprint of over 2000 square feet, Chantilly ranks no higher than it does because Richard Henry Lee built a house and lived in a style that reflected not the property he actually owned but the the property he expected eventually to receive when his brother settled their father's estate. Indeed, Lee only held a lease for the five hundred acres of his Chantilly plantation in Westmoreland County.<sup>53</sup>

Yet another apparent dissonance in housing and landholding exists for those seven planters who rank below John Rochester in terms of landholdings but who lived in larger dwellings. In five of these cases, eighteenth-century documentary sources suggest that the planters derived a significant portion of their income from enterprises other than agriculture. From his dwelling site at Merry Point in Lancaster County, John Davis managed a tobacco-inspection warehouse and operated a ferry across the Western Branch of the Corotoman River.<sup>54</sup> There is evidence that John Payne operated a

<sup>52</sup> J. Motley Booker, "Mt. Zion and Its People," Bulletin of the Northumberland County Historical Society, 9 (1972), pp. 2-10.

<sup>53</sup> Philip Ludwell Lee to Richard Henry Lee, 6 January 1763, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 14, pp. 187-191. When Thomas Lee died in 1750, he left Stratford to his son Philip Ludwell Lee and assigned him the responsibility of distributing other tracts to his seven brothers and sisters. The younger Lee was slow to execute his father's will. As a result, his siblings spent much of their adulthood in vague state of social and economic suspension. Paul C. Nage!, The Lees of Virginia: Seven Generations of an American Family (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 65-75. For more, see entries for Chantilly and Stratford in the catalog.

<sup>54</sup> A tobacco warehouse bearing the designation "Davis's



smithy, a tavern, or both at Paynes Shop in Lancaster County.<sup>55</sup> John Hague probably kept a store near his dwelling site at a crossroads in Westmoreland County.<sup>56</sup> Isaac Hurst of Roadview in Northumberland County was a joiner. His cousin Thomas Hurst of nearby Hurstville may have practiced the craft as well.<sup>57</sup>

Explanations of this sort, however, cannot account for every challenge to the smooth correlation of landed wealth and house size. One particular enlightening case involves William Augustine

Warehouse" appears on a 1784 map of the Corotoman River, Virginia State Library and Archives. The Merry Point ferry, still in operation today, is one of thirty-five ferries known to have been based on the Northern Neck of Virginia between 1700 and 1800. See Clifford C. Presnall, "Ferries of the Northern Neck of Virginia," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 29 (December 1979), pp. 3258-3278.

<sup>55</sup> At least by 1782, the creek north of Paynes Shop was called "Shop Creek." Will of Robert Gilmour, 10 July 1782, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 20, f. 239. At the October court of 1804, John Payne's son Merryman Payne was granted a license to keep an ordinary at his house "next the road in this county." Lancaster County Order Book 22A, p. 61. Eighteenth-century commercial activity at Paynes Shop is also implied by the location of the house and its relatively small surrounding acreage at a crossroads that connected the Lancaster County courthouse, Davis's Warehouse, and Chowning's Ferry.

<sup>56</sup> There clearly was a store at the Hague by 1828. William Nelson Inventory, 10 January 1829, Westmoreland County Account Book 14, pp. 266-285. For circumstantial evidence that John Hague maintained a store on the site during his late eighteenth-century tenure, see the Hague catalog entry.

<sup>57</sup> Abraham Shears to Isaac Hurst, 10 December 1757, Northumberland County Record Book 4, pp. 166-167. In this document, Shears referred to Hurst as a "joyner." County records also assign the designation "joiner" to Thomas Hurst, the father of Isaac Hurst of Roadview and the uncle of Thomas Hurst of Hurstville. Carolyn H. Jett, "The Anchorage," Bulletin of the Northumberland County Historical Society 24 (1988) p. 84.

Washington and his two houses in Westmoreland County.<sup>58</sup> Until 1779, Washington lived at Popes Creek in a one-and-a-half-story wood-framed house built on a brick foundation (fig. 15).<sup>59</sup> Popes Creek probably had a gable roof--perhaps with clipped ends like those that distinguish the rooflines of several nearby houses. Seams in the foundation walls indicate that the house had been constructed in at least four building campaigns. The resulting U-shaped form probably was organized around a central passage with four rooms and several closets on the first floor. There may have been between two and four additional rooms in the half-story above stairs.

In terms of available living space, Popes Creek was not a small house. With a footprint of 1678 square feet, it ranks ninth among all forty-three study houses, a position roughly equivalent to its owner's rank as the fourth-largest landholder. However, unlike the houses of the three richest landowners, the elevations of Popes Creek were innocent of carefully articulated brickwork or classically inspired details. Popes Creek may have looked like nearby Twiford or Walnut Hill, although both of these houses were built in single campaigns. Perhaps it is more likely that William Augustine Washington's house had the asymmetrical appearance of Towles Point or Linden Farm, both of which were, like Popes Creek, the result of incremental assembly.

During the winter of 1779, Popes Creek was destroyed by fire. William Augustine Washington swiftly built a new dwelling, a two-

<sup>58</sup> Both houses are included in the ranking of houses according to their owner's wealth in 1782 because Popes Creek survived until 1779 and because there is so much documentary and archaeological evidence concerning its eighteenth-century form and contents.

<sup>59</sup> For documentation of Popes Creek, see the catalog entry. Though it was destroyed in 1779, Popes Creek has remained the subject of much attention and frequent investigation because Augustine and Mary Ball Washington were living on the site in 1732 when their son George Washington was born.

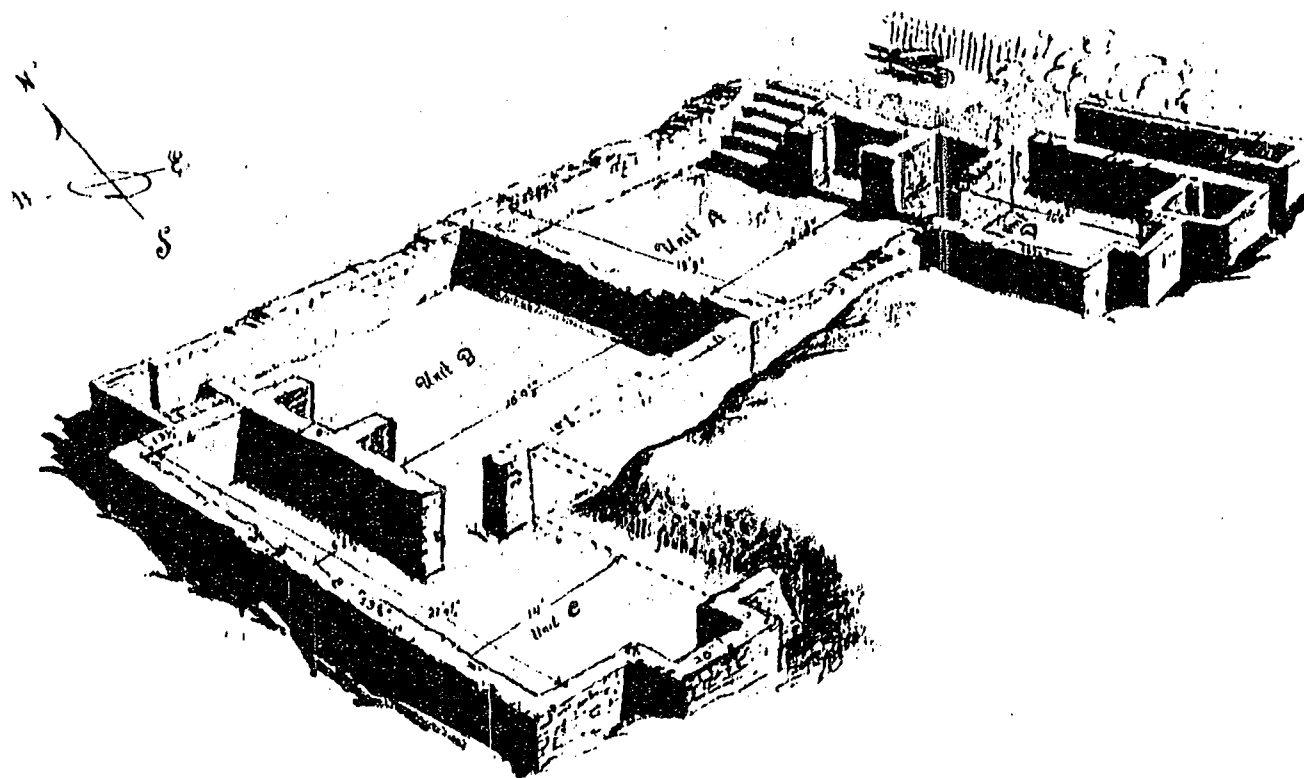


Fig. 15. Perspective Drawing, Popes Creek Foundations, Westmoreland County, Virginia, about 1936. (George Washington Birthplace National Monument.)

story brick structure, on a nearby inland site. This new house, called "Blenheim," was habitable at least by September of 1780 (fig. 16).<sup>60</sup> Because it is a two-story dwelling, Blenheim encloses roughly the same amount of floor space--and the same number of rooms--encompassed on the main floor of Popes Creek. Its Flemish-bond brick walls and segmental-arched openings surely made a more formal architectural presentation than the house it replaced. In terms of its ground dimensions, however, Blenheim holds a position sharply at variance with William Augustine Washington's standing near the top of the Northern Neck landholders. Among the forty-three study houses, Blenheim ranks twenty-fourth in size.

What William Augustine Washington's two houses suggest is the extent to which a planter's inclination affected the size and quality of early Virginia's domestic architecture. If his landholdings are an accurate measure of his resources, then Washington could handily have afforded a domestic seat both larger than Blenheim and more imposing than Popes Creek. Washington's contentment with comparatively modest accommodations emphasizes the significance of choice in the construction and use of houses in eighteenth-century Virginia. Expensive houses existed in colonial Virginia not only because some planters could afford to build them, but also because they chose to do so.

Why, then, did some planters regard pretentious houses worth the time and trouble while others did not? One obvious answer has to do with the planters's varying comprehension of their context. The forty-three study houses are all ranked and compared according to the number of acres in Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties for which their owners paid taxes in 1782. The very richest planters, however, also owned substantial landed estates beyond the boundaries of this four-county Tidewater

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<sup>60</sup> See the entry for Blenheim in the catalog following.



Fig. 16. Blenheim, Westmoreland County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)

peninsula. Indeed, Robert Wormeley Carter of Sabine Hall, Henry Lee of Stratford, John Tayloe of Mount Airy, and George Turberville of Peckatone all paid taxes on such extensive quantities of land that in 1787 and 1788 they ranked among the hundred richest landowners in the entire commonwealth of Virginia.<sup>61</sup> Thus the decisions they or their forefathers had made to build capacious houses shaped and embellished according to trends recognizably "of taste" on both sides of the Atlantic represents their sense of themselves--and their presentation of themselves--as planters positioned at the figurative center of a landscape that was regional in scale.<sup>62</sup> Two-story double-pile masonry houses carefully finished with classical details figured on the eighteenth-century Virginia landscape as signs that the residents's perspective and influence were not confined to the county-sized parameters that dominated the vision and the actions of most Virginians.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Main, "The One Hundred," pp. 372, 377-378, and 382-383. Though he died in 1782, Philip Ludwell Lee was identified as head of the Stratford-based Lee household in 1782. By 1787, Henry "Lighthorse Harry" Lee owned the estate. It is important to emphasize that the Carters, Lees, Tayloes, and Turbervilles were not the only Northern Neck families who owned land beyond Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties--they were just the richest. William Augustine Washington, for example, owned at least six thousand acres of land distributed through northern Virginia and southern Maryland. Will of William Augustine Washington, 12 July 1810, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 22, pp. 165-169.

<sup>62</sup> The term "dwelling houses of taste" as a designation for structures of Sabine Hall's scale and finish is Landon Carter's. Greene, editor, Diary of Landon Carter, v. 2, p. 1123.

<sup>63</sup> This is not to say that the builders of pretentious houses were entirely--or even partly--detached from their local county contexts. For example, John Tayloe of Mount Airy kept a county-level perspective through local marriages of his daughters. Indeed,

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If Popes Creek and Blenheim appear out of rank near one end of the landholding scale, Indian Banks looks misplaced at the other. Built of brick to two full stories and with dimensions that enclose over a thousand square feet of space, this structure embodies most of the characteristics of housing favored by the very wealthiest Northern Neck planters (fig. 17). Yet it stands, in terms of its owner's landed estate, amidst the bottom quarter of the forty-three study houses--beneath the solid but very small dwellings of John Rochester and William Claughton. This position in the hierarchy of study houses does not indicate that planters who owned no more than 250 acres were sufficiently well-off to build large and elegant masonry houses. Rather, it suggests that the owners of Indian Banks suffered a decline in their economic fortunes after the house was built. While the sorting of all forty-three study houses according to the wealth of their owners in a single year is one useful way to investigate the relationship between wealth and housing in eighteenth century Virginia, this strategy masks the effect of time on the social and economic position of specific dwellings. A closer look at the personal estates of planters who died in possession of a study house can suggest a more temporally sensitive correlation of wealth and domestic architecture. It also can reveal how substantial dwellings may have figured in eighteenth-century patterns of domestic display and consumption.

Probate inventories, officially supervised and assembled lists of a decedent's possessions, offer one important source of information concerning personal property in colonial Virginia. Among the Northern Neck's eighteenth-century documentary records, thirty-three useful inventories survive.<sup>64</sup> Dating from the second Sarah Tayloe had married William Augustine Washington of Popes Creek. Lawrence Washington Latane, "Blenheim," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 25 (December 1975), p. 2706.

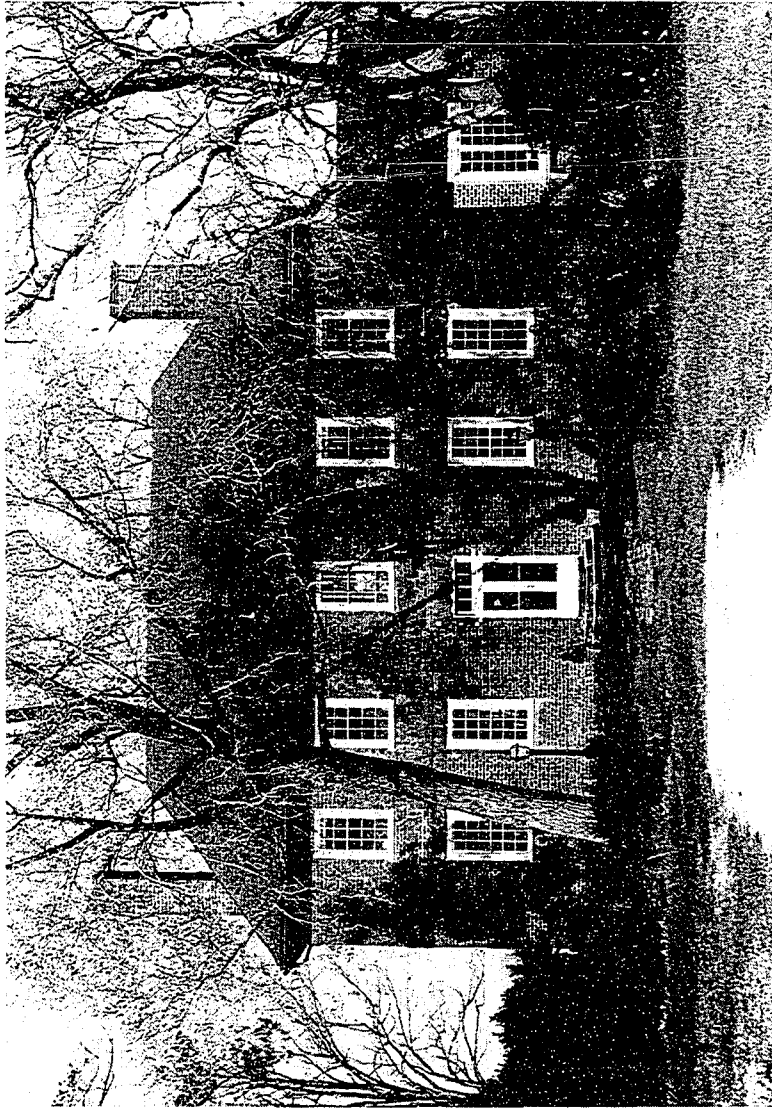


Fig. 17. Indian Banks, Richmond County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)



decade of the eighteenth century through the very early years of the nineteenth century, these inventories reveal the character, quantity, and value of the moveable property associated with twenty-four of the forty-three study houses (table 6).<sup>65</sup> Because of the near century-long span of probate dates and because some inventories

<sup>64</sup> Although colonial Virginia law required the preparation of probate inventories, some estates went unrecorded. Others estates were documented, but the resulting lists of possessions were never entered into record. The very wealthiest colonial Virginians often chose to submit inventories not to their county courts but to Virginia's General Court, the records for which did not survive the Civil War. This is probably why there are no known inventories for the estates of John Tayloe II of Mount Airy, Francis Lightfoot Lee of Menokin, and Richard Henry Lee of Chantilly. Inventories also varied drastically in quality. Some are obviously the results of exhaustive scrutiny and evaluation, while others betray a very haphazard approach to the task of appraising a decedent's personal estate. Although there are, among eighteenth-century records concerning the forty-three study houses, about fifty surviving inventories, some do not contain sufficient information to make them useful. Inventories such as those for Landon Carter of Sabine Hall and Gawin Corbin of Peckatone include no assigned values for the listed possessions. Landon Carter Inventory, 1779; Inventory of Gawin Corbin Estate, 10 April 1760, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 4, pp. 111-112. Other inventories are so incomplete that they yield obviously distorted values. Though indications are that Thomas Lee owned scores of slaves, none were listed in the inventory that was submitted to the county court seven years after his death. Inventory of Thomas Lee Estate, 17 August 1758, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 4, pp. 77-78.

<sup>65</sup> Thirty-three inventories represent only twenty-four houses because eight of the sites have two or more associated inventories. The 1808 inventory of Grove Mount has been included because unlike most early nineteenth-century inventories its values were calculated in the colonial currence of pounds, shillings, and pence. Inventory of Robert Mitchell Estate, September 1808, Richmond County Will Book 9, pp. 682-696.

TABLE 6: INVENTORIED ESTATES OF NORTHERN NECK HOUSE OWNERS

<u>HOUSE</u>	<u>DECEDENT</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>SLAVES/ SERVANTS</u>	<u>TOOLS/CROPS LIVESTOCK</u>	<u>CASH/ BONDS</u>	<u>H/HOLD GOODS</u>	<u>ESTATE TOTAL</u>
Belle Isle	Wm. Bertrand	1761	849	272	-	92	1213
Belle Isle	Thomas Griffin	1778	4365	870	-	532	5767
Belmont	Robert Gilmour	1782	435	187	-	389	1011
Bladensfield	John Peck	1795	875	95	-	81	1051
Cople Glebe	Thomas Smith	1789	1801	181	-	225	2207
Cox House	Peter Cox	1792	839	486	293	146	1764
Currioman	Thos. Chilton I	1765	1349	253	-	261	1863
Currioman	Thos. Chilton II	1781	1335	426	-	291	2052
Elba	Presley Cox	1766	165	139	111	136	587
Grove Mt.	Robert Mitchell	1808	3674	844	-	426	4944
Ind. Banks	John Glascock	1756	423	75	-	182	680
Ind. Banks	Wm. Glascock	1785	214	25	-	45	284
Linden Fm.	Andrew Dew I	1714	-	69	29	72	187
Linden Fm.	Andrew Dew II	1726	-	18	-	7	25
Linden Fm.	William Dew	1770	-	44	-	27	71
Millenbeck	William Ball IV	1742	511	178	-	335	1024
Millenbeck	William Ball VI	1785	821	240	-	173	1234
Monroe Ho.	Spence Monroe	1774	450	167	-	71	688
Morattico	Raw. Downman	1781	2392	577	51	955	3975
Morattico	Jos. Downman	1799	4780	1128	-	824	6732
Mt. Airy	John Tayloe	1748	8171	1468	-	872	10,511

Oakley	Rawleigh Chinn	1756	578	78	-	127	783
Oakley	John Chinn	1791	3096	604	-	295	3995
Peckatone	Geo. Turberville	1793	1811	777	-	897	3485
Popes Crk.	Aug. Washington	1762	2926	834	-	744	4617
Roch. Ho.	John Rochester	1795	396	148	131	117	792
Sh. Ferry	Ezekial Gilbert	1752	215	57	2	38	312
Stratford	Philip L. Lee	1775	4740	1117	-	1404	7389
Towles Pt.	Stork. Towles	1765	813	40	-	262	1115
Verville	James Gordon	1768	1712	563	133	469	8015
Wilton	Rich. Jackson I	1764	652	154	-	200	1006
Wilton	Rich. Jackson II	1787	906	253	-	94	1253
Woodford	B. McCarty II	1773	834	116	-	102	1052

appear more complete than others, the contents of these documents are best compared when sorted into categories. This classification solves the problem of correlating actual estate values, which varied with economic cycles over the course of the eighteenth century. It also permits the evaluation of possessions in terms of their relationship to production or consumption.<sup>66</sup>

In eighteenth-century Virginia, the ownership of labor was second only to land in importance as a productive resource. All but three of the thirty-three Northern Neck decedents owned at least a few slaves, and in all but these three cases, servants and slaves constituted the most valuable component of any personal estate. Indeed, for all but four decedents, the value of human chattel amounted to more than the combined worth of all other inventoried goods.<sup>67</sup>

Besides servants and slaves, all of the inventories contain a quantity of other possessions necessary to the productive life of an eighteenth-century Virginia household and plantation.<sup>68</sup> Various species of livestock--horses, cattle, sheep, swine, and fowl--were

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<sup>66</sup> The challenge of differentiating inventoried goods between those associated with productivity and those associated with material comforts has been addressed by Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "Inventories and the Analysis of Wealth and Consumption Patterns in St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1658-1777," Historical Methods 13 (Spring 1980), pp. 81-104.

<sup>67</sup> The three Dews of Linden Farm in Richmond County were the only planters among the thirty-three to own no slaves. Robert Gilmour of Belmont in Lancaster County is the only planter who owed more of his wealth to the combined value of his tools, crops, livestock and household accoutrements (£576) than to the value of his slaves (£435).

<sup>68</sup> In the full analysis of these thirty-three inventories, the various productive components of each estate--livestock, tools, crops, and cash or bonds--were sorted and counted separately. They are combined in a single category here.

significant aspects of every estate. Tools associated not only with the cultivation of tobacco and grain but also with fishing, brewing, milling, building, storage, and transportation were quite numerous--but ultimately inexpensive--components of every inventory.<sup>69</sup> Harvested crops made a small difference to the value of some estates. The appearance in inventories of hogheads of tobacco, barrels of wheat and corn, or stacks of blades and fodder varied not only seasonally but also according to the diligence of individual appraisers.<sup>70</sup> Currency and promissory notes represent a fifth category of potentially productive resource available to at least seven of the thirty-three planters. It is fairly obvious that many appraisers neglected--or were prevented by survivors from investigating--a decedent's holdings in bonds outstanding or cash on hand.

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<sup>69</sup> Among most of the thirty-three inventories, tools represent no more than 3 or 4 percent of the total value. Only for Ezekial Gilbert at Shearman's Ferry in Lancaster County did tools amount to as much as 9 percent of the estate. The sorting into categories of inventoried slaves, servants, livestock, crops, cash, and bonds was a relatively straightforward business, but distinguishing tools from household accoutrements was not always so easy. The inventories of Peter Cox and Joseph B. Downman proved particularly valuable guides in this process of differentiation, for both contain a list of items under the heading "Plantation Utensils." These two lists because the standard by which items with questionable functions were classified as either tools or domestic furnishings. Inventory of Peter Cox Estate, 14 December 1792, Northumberland County Record Book 14, pp. 680-683; Inventory of Joseph B. Downman Estate, 26 December 1799, Lancaster County Estate Book 1796-1806, pp. 114-121.

<sup>70</sup> For more on seasonal variation in colonial Virginia inventories, see Anna L. Hawley, "The Meaning of Absence: Household Inventories in Surry County, Virginia, 1690-1715," Early American Probate Inventories, Peter Benes, editor, (Boston: Boston University, 1989), pp. 23-31.

The remainder of each inventory is devoted not to tools of production but to tools of consumption--to those domestic accoutrements that made life for Virginia planters comfortable, pleasing, impressive, or luxurious.<sup>71</sup> Ownership of such items as furniture, textiles, bedding, ceramics, plate, cutlery, jewelry, books, and clothing significantly increased the value of a planter's estate, but except to the extent that their display could facilitate an advantageous marriage or a lucrative appointment, rich furnishings were not themselves the makings of wealth.<sup>72</sup>

For most of the thirty-three inventories associated with Northern Neck study houses, the value of household goods as compared to the value of the entire personal estate is relatively low (table 7). On average, accoutrements of domestic comfort or luxury amount to 17.2 percent of an estate's total worth; the median proportion of value in household goods is 14.8 percent. Only for ten of the thirty-three inventories do such goods represent more than 20 percent of a decedent's total personal wealth. These figures suggest that successful eighteenth-century Virginians recognized the

<sup>71</sup> What remains in each inventory after slaves and servants, stock, tools, crops, and cash or bonds are sorted into separate categories are almost entirely domestic and personal furnishings. Thus this last category is called "household goods." Included among these accoutrements, however, are a number of luxurious vehicles like George Turberville's "coach and 6 harness compleat with travelling trunk" at Peckatone. Inventory of George Turberville Estate, 19 April 1793, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 7, pp. 135-143.

<sup>72</sup> Demonstrations of the way colonial inventories can reveal standards of living and levels of consumption appear in Carr and Walsh, "Inventories and the Analysis of Wealth and Consumption," pp. 81-104. and in Barbara G. Carson and Cary Carson, "Life-Styles in St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1670—1800," paper presented in Atlanta at the annual conference of the Southern Historical Association, 12 November 1976.

TABLE 7: HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL PROPERTY OF NORTHERN NECK HOUSE OWNERS

<u>HOUSE</u>	<u>DECEDENT</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TOTAL ESTATE</u>	<u>HHOLD GOODS</u>	<u>% OF TOTAL</u>
Belle Isle	Wm. Bertrand	1761	1213	92	7.6
Belle Isle	Thomas Griffin	1778	5767	532	9.2
Belmont	Robert Gilmour	1782	1011	389	38.5
Bladensfield	John Peck	1795	1051	81	7.7
Cople Glebe	Thomas Smith	1789	2207	225	10.2
Cox House	Peter Cox	1792	1764	146	8.3
Currioman	Thos. Chilton I	1765	1863	261	14.0
Currioman	Thos. Chilton II	1781	2052	291	14.2
Elba	Presley Cox	1766	587	136	23.3
Grove Mt.	Robert Mitchell	1808	4944	426	8.6
Ind. Banks	John Glascock	1756	680	182	26.8
Ind. Banks	Wm. Glascock	1785	284	45	15.9
Linden Fm.	Andrew Dew I	1714	187	72	38.5
Linden Fm.	Andrew Dew II	1726	25	7	28.0
Linden Fm.	William Dew	1770	71	27	38.0
Millenbeck	William Ball IV	1742	1024	335	32.7
Millenbeck	William Ball VI	1785	1234	173	14.0
Monroe Ho.	Spence Monroe	1774	688	71	10.3
Morattico	Raw. Downman	1781	3975	955	24.0
Morattico	Jos. Downman	1799	6732	824	12.2

Mt. Airy	John Tayloe	1748	10,511	872	8.3
Oakley	Rawleigh Chinn	1756	783	127	16.3
Oakley	John Chinn	1791	3995	295	7.4
Peckatone	Geo. Turberville	1793	3485	897	25.7
Popes Crk.	Aug. Washington	1762	4617	744	16.1
Roch. Ho.	John Rochester	1795	792	117	14.8
Sh. Ferry	Ezekial Gilbert	1752	312	38	12.2
Stratford	Phillip L. Lee	1775	7389	1404	19.0
Towles Pt.	Storkley Towles	1765	1115	262	23.5
Verville	James Gordon	1768	8015	469	5.9
Wilton	Rich. Jackson I	1764	1006	200	19.9
Wilton	Rich. Jackson II	1787	1253	94	7.5
Woodford	B. McCarty II	1773	1052	102	9.7



importance of productive resources: mahogany dining tables and multiple sets of bed linen, unlike slaves, hoes, scythes, and barrels of corn, could not enhance a planter's capacity to amass still more wealth.

What of the six decedents whose holdings in tools of consumption amounted to more than 25 percent of their personal property? When Robert Gilmour of Belmont died in 1782, household goods represented nearly 40 percent of his total personal worth (fig. 18). Documentary records suggest that Gilmour was an aged planter with two sons grown and established on their own tracts of land.<sup>73</sup> Margin notations in the Lancaster County land tax records further indicate that the eleven hundred acres for which Gilmore paid taxes were actually in the hands of three tenants: W. W. Blakemore, Edward Carter, and William Carpenter.<sup>74</sup> Thus it appears that the substantial proportion of domestic accoutrements in Gilmore's estate reflect his life in retirement. He had assigned some of his productive resources--certainly his land, perhaps some slaves as well--to his sons Robert and John Morton Gilmour. Most of his remaining land was rented to neighboring planters.

An intergenerational distribution of wealth holding may also account for fact that William Ball IV of Millenbeck committed 32.7 percent of his personal estate to household goods.<sup>75</sup> When Ball died

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<sup>73</sup> Will of Robert Gilmour, 10 July 1782, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 20, f. 239. Certain episodes in the eighteenth-century history of the Gilmour family are recounted in a letter between descendants of Frances Downman who married the son of Robert Gilmour II. Letter of Julia R. Downman to Robert Henry Downman, 12 March 1886, Downman Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>74</sup> Lancaster County Land Tax Lists 1782-1783, Virginia State Library and Archives.

<sup>75</sup> Millenbeck was abandoned sometime in the early nineteenth



Fig. 18. Belmont, Lancaster County, Virginia, 1940. (Photo, C. O. Greene, Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress.)

in 1742, his father was still alive and in possession of substantial tracts of land. Ball's estate included a joiner's shop, a silversmith's shop, and the tools of both trades.<sup>76</sup> While these possessions represent investments in productive resources, they also indicate an unusually sanguine stance toward the local market for such goods as elegant furniture and silver plate. Ball's views regarding the role of household commodities in the getting and storing of wealth apparently involved a serious miscalculation, and his only son suffered the consequences. Ten years after he assumed control of his father's estate, William Ball V abruptly left the colony, abandoning a wife and child to the stewardship of Richard Lee, to whom he conveyed a power of attorney.<sup>77</sup> When he investigated Ball's affairs, Lee was probably not surprised to discover financial distress. He quickly arranged to sell most of Ball's property and began supervising the remainder of the estate on behalf of the child William Ball VI. Residents of Lancaster County learned that William Ball V died at sea in 1760.<sup>78</sup>

century, but during the 1970s, it was the subject of an archaeological excavation. See Nina Tracy Mann, Millenbeck: An Archaeological Excavation of a Colonial Mansion (Lancaster, Virginia: Mary Ball Washington Museum and Library, 1976).

<sup>76</sup> The will of William Ball III, which includes detailed bequests of land to his several grandchildren, was not written or proved until 1744. Will of William Ball III, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 14, ff. 55-59; Inventory of William Ball IV Estate, 9 April 1742, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 13, pp. 297-301.

<sup>77</sup> Margaret Ball to William Ball V, 2 February 1747, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 14, f. 144; William Ball V to Richard Lee, 17 November 1758, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 16, p. 47.

<sup>78</sup> Sale of the property of William Ball V is recorded among the loose papers of the Lancaster County court. His death at sea is confirmed in a 1760 letter written by Joseph Ball in London to Joseph Chinn in Lancaster County, Joseph Ball Letterbook, 1743-1780, Library of Congress. Both documents are cited in Mann,

Three of the largest proportions of household goods belong to three generations of the Dew family, all of Linden Farm in Richmond County (fig. 19). While the Dews's domestic furnishings were relatively modest in total value, they constituted exceptionally large shares of the three estates principally because Dews did not own slaves. The family maintained landowning status on the Northern Neck for three generations, but the documentary record suggests that they endured a gradual economic decline. Andrew Dew I was living in Richmond County by 1708, the year he acquired a tract of 302 acres from the Northern Neck proprietary. When he died in 1714 he owned at least 380 acres.<sup>79</sup> His appraisers valued his personal property at a quite substantial £187. This sum included a considerable quantity of cloth--linen, shalloone, fustian, and oznabrig--and suggests that Dew was a merchant. A "parcell carpenters and coopers tooles" may indicate that he was also a craftsman.<sup>80</sup>

While the first Andrew Dew arrived in Richmond County with many of the tools and intentions necessary to succeed, he made a crucial economic mistake in neglecting to acquire servants or slaves. The effects of his decision are recorded in the 1726 inventory of his son. The estate of Andrew Dew II is by far the poorest of all thirty-three inventories. Paradoxically, although Dew's inventory includes among the largest proportions of household goods, Dew's accoutrements were certainly fewer and probably shabbier than those of any other decedent. His appraisers evaluated Millenbeck, p. 11.

<sup>79</sup> Patent of 302 acres to Andrew Dew, Northern Neck Grants Book 3, p. 213; Patent of 78 acres to Andrew Dew, Northern Neck Grants Book 4, p. 38, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>80</sup> Inventory of Andrew Dew I Estate, 25 May 1714, Richmond County Will Book 3, pp. 180-182.



Fig. 19. Linden Farm, Richmond County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)

most of his furnishings as "old," and almost all of them had made an earlier appearance in Andrew Dew's inventory of 1714.<sup>81</sup>

Despite his relative poverty, Andrew Dew II was able to bequeath to his son the makings of a modest economic recovery. When William Dew died in 1770, his personal estate was worth almost three times that of his father's, although it was less than half that of his grandfather. Moreover, his landholdings had dwindled to 150 acres.<sup>82</sup> Like the two Andrew Dews before him, William Dew ignored the importance of slaveholding to sustained prosperity in colonial Virginia. So it was that Dew's still-modest assemblage of household goods represented a disproportionately large component of his personal worth. Thus the original one-room section of Linden Farm, which probably dates from the tenure of Andrew Dew I, was in terms of total wealth of its owners, the most expensively furnished of all forty-three study houses.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Inventory of Andrew Dew II Estate, 1 March 1726, Richmond County Will Book 5, p. 43.

<sup>82</sup> Inventory of William Dew Estate, 14 March 1770, Richmond County Will Book 7, pp. 58-59. The size of Dew's landholding is recorded in the conveyance of 150 acres to Samuel Dew of Hampshire County from Christopher Lawson, executor of William Dew's estate, 2 December 1770, Richmond County Deed Book 13, p. 176.

<sup>83</sup> Dell Upton has dated the original one-room section of Linden Farm to the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Upton, "Early Vernacular Architecture in Southeastern Virginia," (Ph. D. Dissertation: Brown University, 1980), pp. 189-196. The inventories of the two Andrew Dews strongly suggest that this carefully framed and sealed little house was standing by 1714, and like the other tidy resources accumulated by the first Andrew Dew, it was used but unenhanced between 1714 and 1726. With its terse listing of goods "in the dwelling house," William Dew's inventory indicates that Linden Farm remained a house with a one-room plan until 1770. Apparently the house was unaltered until Edward Saunders acquired the property in 1780. Samuel Dew to Edward

Clearly colonial Virginians were unwise to amass--or unlucky to inherit--personal estate with more than a quarter of its value in household goods. The implications of this economic rule of thumb are most apparent in the case of Indian Banks which, despite its expensive architectural characteristics, ranked in 1782 among the lowest of all forty-three study houses. This two-story brick house stands on land acquired in 1652 by Thomas Glascock, an English immigrant who eventually patented a total of 880 acres in Richmond County.<sup>84</sup> The house was probably built by William Glascock after 1730, when the colonial legislature established a warehouse for tobacco inspection at "Glasscock's Landing," naming Glascock himself as an official inspector.<sup>85</sup> Although Indian Banks may have

Saunders, 9 March 1780, Richmond County Deed Book 15, p. 18. Saunders first built a pair of rooms directly behind the original dwelling. Later he doubled the area of the house with a major addition to the west gable end. Probably in this same campaign, he reorganized the interior partition walls to give Linden Farm a double file of rooms and a central-passage plan, and he constructed both of the existing brick chimneys. This sequence of construction is based largely on the observations, notes, photographs, and drawings of Donald J. Orth, who painstakingly investigated and restored Linden Farm during the 1980s. Interview with Orth, 3 July 1986. A plan of Linden Farm appears in Chapter 2.

<sup>84</sup> Nell M. Nugent, Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1969) v. 1, pp. 146, 276, 280, and 494.

<sup>85</sup> William Waller Hening, editor, The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia . . . (1819-1823; reprint: Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press for the Jamestown Foundation of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1969), v. 4, pp. 143, 266-267, and 335; H. R. McIlwaine, editor, Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia (1925-1966; reprint: Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1978), v. 4, p. 238. A construction date in the 1730s is suggested by the scrolled soffits of the jack arches at Indian Banks. This decorative device, very rare in Virginia, appears on at least two other Chesapeake houses with construction dates in

changed hands within the family twice by mid-century, the earliest inventory for the house dates from 1756. John Glascock's appraisers reckoned his estate to be worth a substantial £680, but ominously, less than 75 percent of the value of his possessions was derived from productive resources such as slaves, tools, and crops.<sup>86</sup> By 1782 Indian Banks was in the hands of another William Glascock whose total landed estate encompassed only 250 acres and whose personal estate, when it was probated three years later, amounted to only £284.<sup>87</sup> At the end of the century, the land associated with Indian Banks had dwindled to 140 acres and the house itself had been partitioned into living quarters for two Glascock families. The property at last was sold out of the family in 1822.<sup>88</sup>

the 1730s. Calder Loth, "Notes on the Evolution of Virginia Brickwork from the Seventeenth Century to the Late Nineteenth Century," APT Bulletin 6 (1974) p. 99; Conversation with Orland Ridout V, 3 March 1992. This date of construction also makes sense in light of the new visibility and official standing of Glascock's Landing after 1730. Certainly the moldings of surviving interior woodwork at Indian Banks indicate a date of construction before 1750. Conversation with Mark R. Wenger, 17 March 1989.

<sup>86</sup> Inventory of John Glascock Estate, [undated, although it appears to be a mid-century document--his will was probated 5 July 1756] Richmond County Will Book 6, pp. 89-90.

<sup>87</sup> Inventory of William Glascock Estate, 7 March 1785, Richmond County Will Book 7, pp. 500-501. Apparently after about 1750 the Glascocks began maintaining and subdividing, rather than improving and augmenting, the land amassed by their forebearers in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In 1782, no member of the Glascock family paid taxes on more than 350 acres. Richmond County Land Tax Lists, 1782, Virginia State Library and Archives.

<sup>88</sup> Richard Glascock bequeathed Indian Banks to his son Milton Syms Glascock, but reserved the northeast wing for his daughter-in-law Elizabeth Glascock. Will of Richard Glascock, 1 June 1801, Richmond County Will Book 9, p. 149. The dwelling tract of Indian Banks is first described as encompassing 140 acres in William



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The relationship between wealth held in productive resources and wealth devoted to material comforts is important and enlightening, but where colonial housing is concerned, the particular significance of personal property is that historians have often linked the quality of housing in the colonial Chesapeake to general patterns of consumption. Small and shoddy dwellings in early Virginia have been regarded as but one aspect of the sparse material culture that characterized life for many in colonial Virginia.<sup>89</sup> Large, substantial, and elegant houses reflect, in the minds of modern scholars, not only considerable wealth but also a refined, "genteel" style of colonial living that required the acquisition of personal and household furnishings in an unprecedented array and profusion.<sup>90</sup>

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Glascok to Richard Glascok, 2 February 1778, Richmond County Deed Book 14, p. 476. Aldea A. Glascok sold Indian Banks to Thomas Dobyys in 1822. Glascok to Dobyys, 3 January 1822, Richmond County Deed Book 21, p. 218.

<sup>89</sup> In their influential discussion of earthfast construction, Cary Carson and his fellow authors explain this "impermanent" form of construction as a result of the planters's inability or unwillingness to establish a sustained material presence in the colonial Chesapeake. Settlers in Maryland and Virginia, they argue, were content with short-term housing either because they intended to make a quick fortune and depart or because high mortality and uncertain markets kept planters in a perpetual "homesteading" phase of settlement and prevented them from realizing the affluence that the colonial economy appeared to promise. Cary Carson, Norman Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, and Dell Upton, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," Winterthur Portfolio 16 (Summer/Autumn 1981), pp. 135-196; reprinted in Robert Blair St. George, editor, Material Life in America, 1600-1860 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp. 113-158.

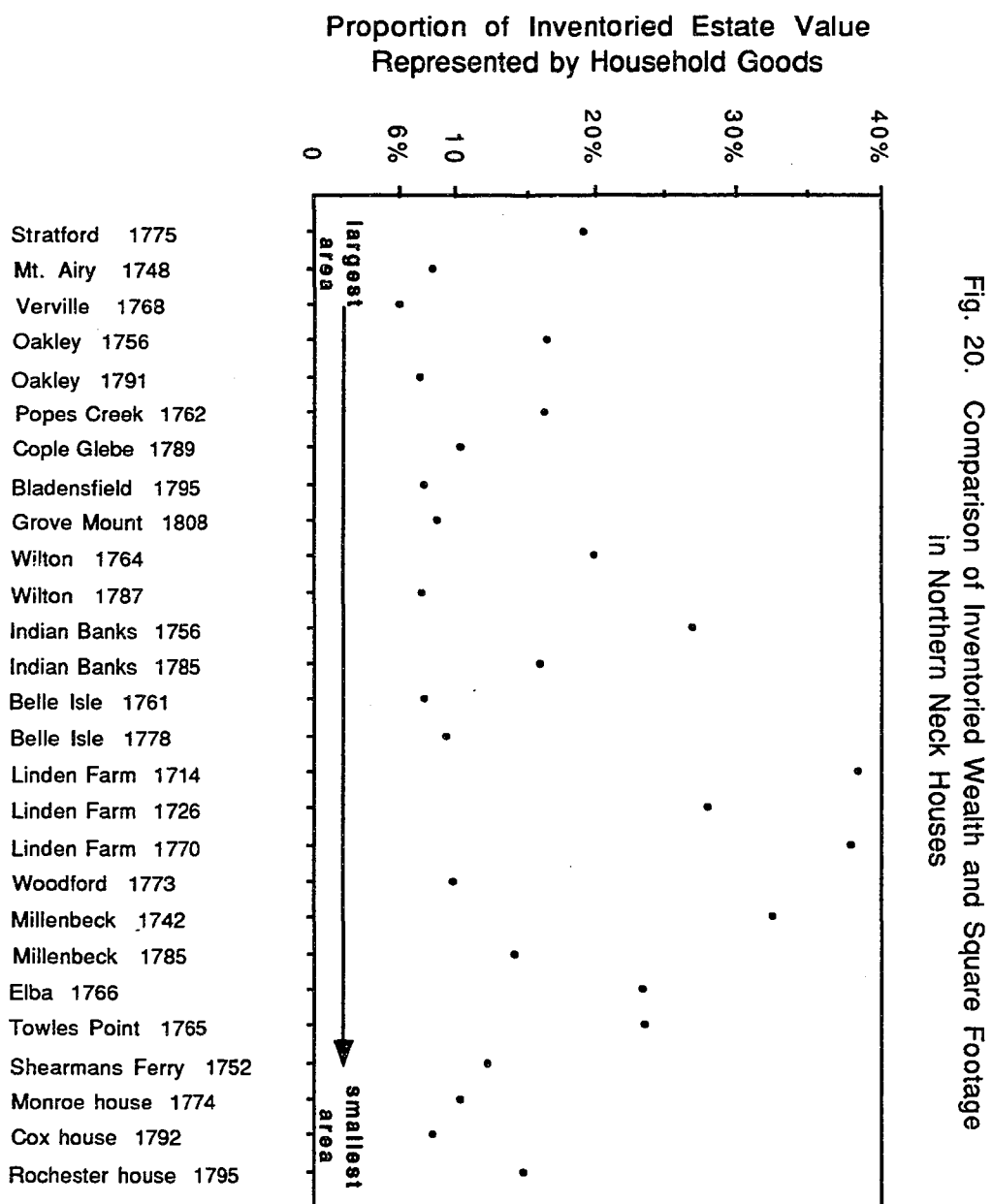
<sup>90</sup> Cary Carson, "The Consumer Revolution in Eighteenth-

If the construction in eighteenth-century Virginia of a large house with expensive qualities is best explained as one manifestation of a planter's decision to adopt a luxurious, genteel style of living, it follows that those planters who built such houses would acquire more and better household furnishings than would their less pretentiously housed neighbors. While it is true that those among the thirty-three decedents with larger personal estates owned more tools of consumption than those whose estates were smaller, the proportional value of their personal estates represented by household goods was not necessarily greater. More to the architectural point, there is no clear relationship between the size of a planter's house and the proportion of his personal estate that was devoted to household goods (fig. 20). John Tayloe, for example, was decidedly richer than Peter Cox, and Mount Airy is much larger and vastly more imposing than Cox's small dwelling. Yet the household furnishings of both planters amounted to 8.3 percent of their total personal wealth.

The case of Belle Isle is instructive in a similar way. Following William Bertrand's death at the Lancaster County plantation in 1761, appraisers organized their inventory of his personal possessions according to the spaces in which they were found. The document thus reveals that Bertrand inhabited a house with a hall and a chamber, both of which contained fireplaces. A small square-proportioned entry modified access from the exterior to each of the two rooms.<sup>91</sup> It may also have contained the staircase. Above

Century America: Why Demand?" Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century, Cary Carson and Ronald Hoffman, editors, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, forthcoming); Richard L. Bushman, The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

<sup>91</sup> Eighteenth-century Virginians sometimes used the word "entry" to designate a passage that extended the entire depth of the



stairs was a small room "over the entry" and one room each "over the hall" and "over the chamber." Since none of these upper spaces had a fireplace, it appears that the house was only one full story in height. William Bertrand's house had been built to replace an earlier dwelling which still stood on the site. One of its rooms was used as Bertrand's kitchen. The appraisers referred to the other room as the "old hall." This dwelling-turned-kitchen kept company on Bertrand's dwelling site with a dairy, a shop, and a store.<sup>92</sup> Possessing a personal estate worth over a thousand pounds, Bertrand was quite a wealthy planter. By comparison with the forty-three study houses, however, his dwelling was relatively modest in size and form. Bertrand's acquisitions in household furnishings were similarly modest: they amounted to only 7.6 of his personal wealth.

William Bertrand's principal heir was his grandson Thomas Bertrand Griffin, and to this young man he left his dwelling plantation on Deep Creek.<sup>93</sup> Between 1761, when he inherited dwelling. In 1794 Elizabeth Collins Lee referred to the passage at Sully in Fairfax County as "a delightful entre." Lee to her sister-in-law, 15 July 1794, quoted in Robert Edward Wagstaff, Sully Plantation 1794: Stories and Letters (Fairfax, Virginia: Sully Foundation, 1974). Nevertheless, the sparse contents of William Bertrand's entry--a walnut table, a spy glass, and an old gun--strongly suggest that it was a small square-proportioned lobby. That the entry was contained within the house rather than set out in an advanced bay is suggested by the presence of an "upstairs . . . entry" which contained two trunks filled with Bertrand's bed and table linens. Inventory of William Bertrand Estate, 17 April 1761, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 16, ff. 148-149.

<sup>92</sup> Bertrand Inventory, ff. 148-149. The surmise concerning fireplaces in the Bertrand house is based on the work of Cathy Grosfils, who has argued that historians can use the presence of such fire-related tools as andirons, fire dogs, shovels, pokers, and tongs to determine whether or not an inventoried room was heated. See Catherine Howe Grosfils, "The Chimney Fireplace in Colonial Virginia," (M. A. Thesis: Old Dominion University, 1988).

Bertrand's land, and his own death in 1778, Griffin built on the site the two-story brick house and one-story brick dependencies of Belle Isle (fig. 21). One way to explain Griffin's impulse to replace Bertrand's two-room dwelling with an "elegant new brick house" is in terms of Griffin's superior wealth.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, Griffin was a richer planter. He inherited land and money not only from his maternal grandfather but also from his father Leroy Griffin. He almost certainly received a sizeable dowry from his father-in-law, Carter Burwell of Carter's Grove, James City County, and he also enjoyed the substantial fees due him as clerk of the Lancaster County court.<sup>95</sup> Thus it is no surprise that Griffin left an estate worth over four times that of his grandfather's, nor is it surprising that his furnishings were over five times as valuable as those that filled William Bertrand's house. What is remarkable is that Griffin embraced a new elegance--both in the size and design of this house and in the quality and quantity of his furniture--without devoting a significantly greater share of total assets to his new profusion of goods.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Will of William Bertrand, 17 April 1761, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 16, ff. 127-128.

<sup>94</sup> Belle Isle was characterized as both elegant and new in the 1778 Virginia Gazette advertisement by which Corbin Griffin announced his deceased brother's property for sale. Griffin advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie), 10 July 1778, p. 2, c. 2.

<sup>95</sup> Will of Leroy Griffin, 6 August 1750, quoted in "Abstracts from Records of Richmond County, Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly 1st Series, 17 (January 1909), p. 187. In his own will, Thomas Griffin confirmed that his wife Judith was the daughter of Carter Burwell. Will of Thomas Bertrand Griffin, 21 May 1778, Lancaster County Will Book 20, ff. 129-130. The Virginia Council recognized Griffin as clerk of Lancaster County court in 1771. Benjamin J. Hillman, editor, Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1966), v. 6, p. 405.

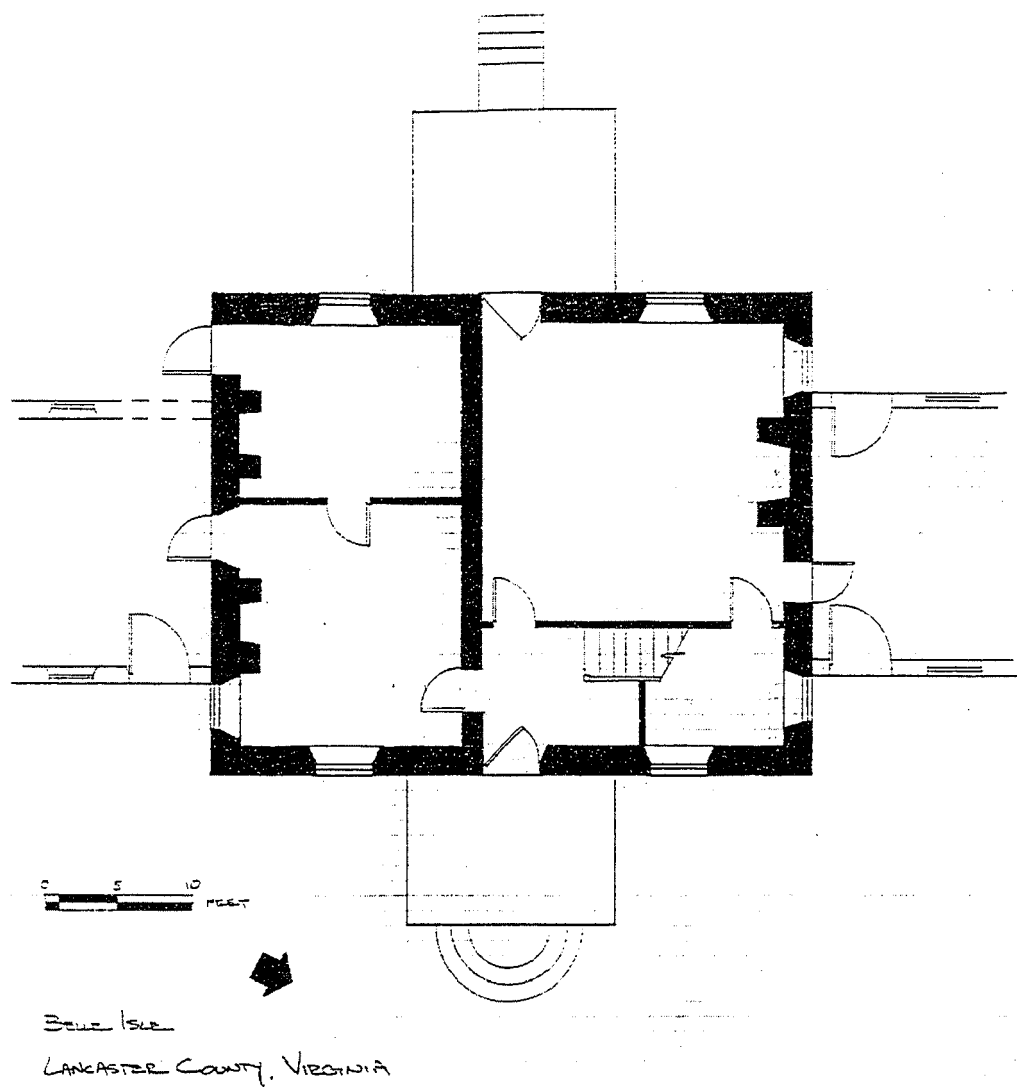


Fig. 21. Plan of Belle Isle, Lancaster County, Virginia. (Drawing, Camille Wells.)

The fact remains, however, that Thomas Griffin lived in a style that was materially more elaborate and expensive than the way of life his grandfather had known. His house was correspondingly larger and more costly. This relationship between dwellings and furnishings on the Belle Isle plantation appears to support recent scholarly arguments about the construction of pretentious houses in colonial America. They were one aspect of the eighteenth-century rise in popularity of a genteel, materially elaborated style of living.<sup>97</sup>

If the "consumer revolution," or the "refinement of America" explain the elegant form and embellishment of Virginia houses like Belle Isle, it follows that the inhabitants of such houses also filled their rooms with the trappings of fashionably genteel living. Because, over the course of the eighteenth century, both formal dining and tea-drinking became occasions of increasing importance to Virginia planters who wanted to live and entertain visitors in a fashionable manner, one way to measure the level of elegance a particular household achieved is to isolate from assemblages of inventoried goods those objects that were devoted to the taking of food or beverages in the company of guests.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Inventory of Thomas Bertrand Griffin Estate, 23 May 1778, Lancaster County Deed/Will Book 20, ff. 142-144.

<sup>97</sup> For discussions of this material elaboration of life, see James Deetz, In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life (New York: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 46-61, 92-117 and Cary Carson and Lorena S. Walsh, "The Material Life of the Early American Housewife," Winterthur Portfolio, forthcoming.

<sup>98</sup> For references to the increased social importance of dining in colonial Virginia, see Carson and Walsh, "Material Life," and Mark R. Wenger, "The Dining Room in Early Virginia," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture III, Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, editors, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), pp. 149-159. For authoritative discussion of tea-drinking as a social

William Bertrand's inventory reveals that his household was equipped for tea-drinking and dining to a respectable but not a socially sophisticated degree.<sup>99</sup> In his hall was a "large old walnut table" and twelve chairs. He also owned a dozen silver tablespoons and as many ivory-handled knives and forks.<sup>100</sup> Of drinking glasses, however, he had only six, and there was nothing in his inventory with enterprise and teawares as the object of demand in early America, see Rodris Roth, "Tea Drinking in Eighteenth-Century America: Its Etiquette and Equipage," Paper 14, Contributions from the Museum of History and Technology, United States National Museum Bulletin 225, (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1961), pp. 61-91, reprinted in Robert Blair St. George, editor, Material Life in America, 1600-1860 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp. 439-462 and Ann Smart Martin, "'Fashionable Sugar Dishes, Latest Fashion Ware': Consumer Demand for Eighteenth-Century Tea and Tablewares," The Historic Chesapeake: Archaeological Contributions, Paul Shackel and Barbara J. Little, editors, (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), pp. 169-187.

<sup>99</sup> According to Barbara Carson's classification of dining utensils listed in 224 inventories of households in early national Washington, William Bertrand's household was decent in its level of equipage, but not socially aspiring or elite. See Barbara G. Carson, Ambitious Appetites: Dining, Behavior, and Patterns of Consumption in Federal Washington (Washington, D. C.: American Institute of Architects Press, 1990), pp. 30-57.

<sup>100</sup> The reference in his inventory of knives and forks indicates that Bertrand's household had abandoned the old style of eating with a combination of spoons and fingers. Guests at Bertrand's table could practice the still-new custom of seizing, cutting, scooping, and transporting food almost entirely with dining utensils. In her analysis of inventories in early national Washington, Barbara Carson considers the presence or absence of forks and knives as crucial to the differentiation of poor, plain, and unpretentious households from those that were affected by a sense of what was respectable, fashionable, or socially desirable. Carson, Ambitious Appetites, pp. 31, 59-73.



which to serve or drink spirits. For laying his table, moreover, Bertrand had only an unitemized "sett old china" worth five shillings. Accoutrements for tea drinking were similarly modest in quality and diversity. Presumably, there were teacups and saucers amidst Bertrand's china. In addition to these essential articles, he owned only six silver teaspoons and a tea table and board. Altogether, Bertrand's accoutrements for sociable drinking and eating amounted to about £25 in value.<sup>101</sup>

Thomas Griffin, by contrast, was prepared for formal tea drinking not only with a "neat tea table" and a mahogany tea chest, but also with several teapots, canisters, and boards. For the business of preparing and serving the tea, there were twelve teaspoons, a set of tongs, and a strainer, all made of silver. Griffin's accoutrements for dining included two mahogany dining tables, twenty-two chairs, a quantity of "Q. china" dishes collectively worth over £6, and a dozen wine glasses.<sup>102</sup> Unlike Bertrand, Griffin could make his dinner table elegant with several serving and presentation pieces, including silver salts, a "silver-top'd stand with cruets," a tureen, a fish dish and strainer, two butter boats, and a pair of decanters. In all, the tools with which Griffin could preside over tea or dinner amounted to a relatively substantial £84 and represent a much more socially ambitious style of living than his grandfather had enjoyed.<sup>103</sup>

Griffin's inventory, however, records certain obvious and enlightening gaps in his dining assemblage. Notably absent from the very explicit list of china were the teacups and saucers without

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<sup>101</sup> Bertrand Inventory, ff. 148-149.

<sup>102</sup> The "Q china" may have been Queensware, a cream-colored earthenware of English manufacture that became fashionable in Virginia during the 1760s. Ivor Noel Hume, A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), pp. 124-125.

<sup>103</sup> Griffin Inventory, ff. 142-144.

which the other expensive tea-making and -serving equipment was all but useless. While Griffin could have seated and distributed plates to as many as twenty-two guests, he could supply only eleven of them with tablespoons. A set of white-handled knives and forks numbered only six--unless Griffin was willing to introduce to his dining table an additional six knives and forks with plain iron handles.<sup>104</sup>

One explanation for these lapses in household accoutrements is the sudden and early death of Thomas Griffin's wife. When they married in 1766, the couple may have planned a fashionable social life, with Judith Burwell Griffin frequently receiving guests for tea and, as was becoming increasingly the custom during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, assuming a prominent role at the formal dining table as well.<sup>105</sup> In the third year of their marriage, perhaps while they were yet assembling the components of a stylish household, Judith Carter Griffin was "snatched away by a violent sudden illness."<sup>106</sup> Thus the costly and diverse dining equipment

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<sup>104</sup> Griffin Inventory, ff. 142-144.

<sup>105</sup> While both men and women drank tea in the eighteenth century, the formal presentation and serving of tea was a social event dominated by women. See Roth, "Tea Drinking." Until the end of the eighteenth century, presiding at table was exclusively a male prerogative in many elite Virginia households. To his great discomfort, Philip Fithian found himself performing the functions of "Man at Table" one evening in 1773 when Robert Carter and his older sons were all away from Nomini Hall. Farish, Journal and Letters of Fithian, p. 40. By 1786, a dinner guest at Warner Hall in Gloucester County remarked approvingly that "Mr. and Mrs. Lewis did the honors of their table in a genteel, easy manner." Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling, editors, Quebec to Carolina in 1785-1786: Being the Travel Diary and Observations of Robert Hunter, Jr., a Young Merchant of London (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1943), p. 229.

<sup>106</sup> This passage concerning the death of Judith Burwell Griffin, along with the date of their marriage appear in Thomas Bertrand

listed in Thomas Bertrand Griffin's inventory may better reflect the social aspirations of his married youth than they do the social realities of his nine-year widowerhood.<sup>107</sup>

If the elaborate but incomplete dining equipment in Thomas Griffin's inventory reflects an intended style of genteel entertaining thwarted by his wife's death, then what was the purpose of Griffin's elegant house? When it was advertised for sale in 1778, Belle Isle was described as "lately built."<sup>108</sup> Thus Griffin apparently constructed the house after the 1769 death of Judith Griffin, and for reasons that had little to do with the sort of genteel domestic presentation he and his wife had once planned. The most obvious generative force for the construction of Griffin's two-story, double-pile brick plantation house is his appointment in 1771 to the prestigious clerkship of the Lancaster County court. If Belle Isle is the result of this important event, then it was built not as the architectural setting for a genteel and fashionable domestic life but as an local instance of public architecture.<sup>109</sup> Like the nearby Lancaster County courthouse, St. Mary's White Chapel, and Christ Church, Belle Isle has brick walls, a substantial pitch, and a symmetrical arrangement of bays. Like these public buildings, Belle Isle clearly was built to be seen and recognized--even from a distance, and even by those who did not approach and enter. Griffin Will, ff. 129-130.

<sup>107</sup> That inconsistencies in an individual's possessions may indicate disparities in expectations and realities is a point best made in Bernard L. Herman, "Multiple Materials, Multiple Meanings: The Fortunes of Thomas Mendenhall," Winterthur Portfolio 19 (Spring 1984), pp. 67-86.

<sup>108</sup> Griffin advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie), 10 July 1778, p. 2, c. 2.

<sup>109</sup> This connection between a planter's impulse to build an imposing house and his achievement of a local--but quite powerful--office also explains the Glascocks's construction of Indian Banks.

built Belle Isle to cut a figure on the landscape, to represent in architectural terms the significant political and social standing that his county office gave him among the local elite.

Thus costly eighteenth-century houses like Belle Isle had more to do with Virginia planters's sense of themselves as players in public life than with their impulse to adopt fashionable and densely accoutred styles of living. This interpretation finds support in the Washington household at Popes Creek, where the furnishings were elegant but the architecture was mundane. When Augustine Washington died in 1764, he was unquestionably a rich planter. He owned an extensive tract of land in Westmoreland County, seventy-six slaves, three indentured servants, and a personal estate worth over four thousand pounds.<sup>110</sup> Among Washington's costly household possessions, dining and tea-taking utensils amounted to £173 in value, and these accoutrements were distinguished not only in quality but also in profusion and diversity.

In addition to a tea table, tea canisters, tea chest, and tea board, Washington owned "a set of tea china," two teapots with stands, a slop bowl, silver strainers and tongs, and twelve silver teaspoons. He could cover his dining tables with several large damask table cloths, and he owned enough chairs and damask napkins to seat and serve dinner to twenty-four in style. Two sets of "table china," one distinguished as "blue and white," were augmented with a generous assortment of dishes for specialized presentations, including sweetmeat saucers, sugar dishes, custard cups, butter plates, and coffee cups with saucers. For drinking, there were

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<sup>110</sup> Charles E. Hatch, Jr., Popes Creek Plantation: Birthplace of George Washington (Washington's Birthplace, Virginia: Wakefield National Memorial Association, 1979), pp. 37-46; Inventory of Augustine Washington Estate, 30 November 1762, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 4, pp. 178-180.

tumblers, water glasses, beer glasses, and twenty wine glasses in two different shapes. Dining utensils included twenty-four silver tablespoons and two sets of green ivory-handled knives and forks--one for dinner and one for "desart." In the middle of a dining table made elegant with all of these accoutrements, Washington probably often positioned his set of silver casters on its revolving silver tray. This centerpiece alone was worth nearly as much as William Bertrand's entire assemblage of dining furniture, tableware, and teaware.<sup>111</sup>

The taking of meals and tea were not the only domestic activities for which Augustine Washington was well equipped. His house was more expensively furnished than Thomas Griffin's Belle Isle--more expensively furnished, indeed, than twenty of the twenty-four study houses for which eighteenth-century inventories survive.<sup>112</sup> Yet the scene of all this splendor was Washington's unpretentious dwelling at Popes Creek. This wood-framed house was quite large by the standards of most Northern Neck households, but its numerous rooms had been built one or two at a time. The resulting one-and-a-half-story, U-shaped structure probably looked like an aggregate with several different rooflines, patterns of fenestration, and styles of brickwork. Conspicuously missing from Pope's Creek were those architectural characteristics that only detailed planning and one concerted building campaign could achieve.

What emerges from the architectural and documentary records of Popes Creek and Belle Isle is one aspect of the larger lesson the

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<sup>111</sup> Washington's set of silver cruets was worth £23. Washington Inventory, pp. 178-180. William Bertrand's dining and tea-drinking equipment were collectively worth £25. Bertrand Inventory, ff. 148-149.

<sup>112</sup> The costliness of Washington's furnishings would be even more obvious if the inventories for Morattico and Peckatone, taken during the 1780s and 1790s, were adjusted to correct for Revolutionary-era inflation.

forty-three study houses have to teach. To match surviving Northern Neck houses with the landholdings and personal estates of their eighteenth-century owners is to throw into sharp relief a relationship between wealth and domestic architecture that is considerably more complex than scholars often suppose. In general, the study houses and their corresponding documentary records suggest that the accumulation of wealth in eighteenth-century Virginia was an enterprise that did not necessarily involve domestic architecture, although some planters clearly regarded the construction of big and expensive houses as improvements to their plantations, and juxtaposed records of land transactions confirm that they were. The analysis of the study houses and their associated wealth also suggests the drive to acquire luxurious goods and the motivation to build an elegant house were not closely linked in colonial Virginia. More frequently, it seems, eighteenth-century Virginians built substantial houses as bids for, or as confirmations of, public standing. Splendid housing shaped with clear referents to the characteristics of public buildings were signs of duties, prerogatives, and influence that extended beyond the limits of a planter's own property.

## CHAPTER 5: SCHOLARSHIP OF THE EARLY VIRGINIA HOUSE

For most of this century, scholars of Virginia's colonial domestic architecture have organized their observations according to a basic, widely accepted distinction between academic and vernacular design. Supporting this scheme of differentiation is the assumption that the elegant mansions of eighteenth-century Virginia are best understood as colonial expressions of Europe's revived classical tradition. Their significance is thus principally aesthetic. By contrast, vernacular dwellings are important mostly for historical reasons--and on account of a relationship with high-style design that scholars explain as either evolutionary or hierarchical. In an evolutionary sense, "simple cottages" deserve attention because they are remnants of Virginia's turbulent seventeenth century--and because they are antecedents of the bigger and better houses that Virginians built later on.<sup>1</sup> Understood hierarchically, they represent the pragmatic approach to housing that characterized Virginia's solid but unsophisticated yeomanry throughout the colonial period.

Fiske Kimball laid the foundations for these distinctions in his 1922 book Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic.<sup>2</sup> For Kimball, academic houses differ from

<sup>1</sup> The term "simple cottages" is taken from Thomas Tileston Waterman, The Mansions of Virginia 1706-1776 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1945), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Kimball's career and scholarship is outlined in Lauren Weiss Bricker, "The Writings of Fiske Kimball: A Synthesis of Architectural History and Practice," The Architectural Historian in America, Elisabeth Blair MacDougall, editor, (Hanover, New

vernacular houses not just in their "general symmetry and . . . application of the classical orders" but also in their "transference of the emphasis from functional considerations to those of pure form."<sup>3</sup> Kimball concentrated his study on the English origins of this sophisticated approach to design, and on the means by which English aesthetic traditions came to influence the houses of colonial America.<sup>4</sup> He noted the role of immigrating patrons such as Alexander Spotswood, who is still credited with influencing the design of the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg, and of immigrating craftsmen like David Minitree, whom Kimball believed to have been summoned from England expressly to supervise the building of Carter's Grove in James City County.<sup>5</sup> Contributions by these and Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1990), pp. 215-235.

<sup>3</sup> Fiske Kimball, Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922), p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> The English origins of colonial academic design have never been seriously challenged, although some scholars have argued that Virginia's biggest and most elaborate eighteenth-century houses reflect Dutch precedents as well. See Nancy Halverson Schless, "Dutch Influence on the Governor's Palace, Williamsburg," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 28 (December 1969), pp. 254-270 and Camille Wells, "Kingsmill Plantation: A Cultural Analysis," (M. A. Thesis: University of Virginia School of Architecture, 1976), pp. 114-133. Barbara Carson has characterized the design of the Governor's Palace as an example of "Anglo-Dutch Palladianism." Carson, The Governor's Palace: The Williamsburg Residence of Virginia's Royal Governor (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1987), pp. 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> Kimball, Domestic Architecture, p. 55. Graham Hood recently reasserted the importance of Spotswood's contribution to the design of the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg. Hood, The Governor's Palace in Williamsburg: A Cultural Study (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 57-58. In his statement that Minitree was an English immigrant, Kimball was



other individuals notwithstanding, Kimball argued that most colonists learned about the principles and motifs of academic design, just as provincial Englishmen did, "through the making of its forms universally accessible to intelligent workmen, or even laymen, by means of books."<sup>6</sup> He acknowledged that colonial interpreters of English architectural patternbooks like James Gibbs's Book of Architecture and Robert Morris's Select Architecture sometimes managed their task poorly. The results, in Virginia and elsewhere, were eighteenth-century buildings that manifest "an application of the classical orders in an isolated and ungrammatical way." Still, there are early Virginia houses that "stand on the same artistic level with their true congeners, the best houses of the small English gentry of the day."<sup>7</sup> Kimball cited Mount Airy in Richmond County as one of these sophisticated structures.

Thomas Tileston Waterman was probably Fiske Kimball's most influential student.<sup>8</sup> In his writings of the 1930s and 1940s, Waterman maintained Kimball's view that the Virginia houses following the guidance of Robert A. Lancaster's Historic Virginia Homes and Churches (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1915), p. 54. Marcus Whiffen drew on documentary evidence of people and work in Williamsburg to establish that Minitree was actually a native of Virginia. Whiffen, The Eighteenth-Century Houses of Williamsburg: A Study of Architecture and Building in the Colonial Capital of Virginia (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1960; revised edition, 1984), pp. 25-26. The latest word on all aspects of design, construction, and alteration at Carter's Grove is Mark R. Wenger, Carter's Grove: A Social and Architectural History, (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, forthcoming).

<sup>6</sup> Kimball, Domestic Architecture, pp. 55-56.

<sup>7</sup> Kimball, Domestic Architecture, p. 60.

<sup>8</sup> For a description of Waterman's career and scholarship, see Fay Campbell Kaynor, "Thomas Tileston Waterman: Student of American Colonial Architecture," Winterthur Portfolio 20 (Summer/Autumn 1985), pp. 103-147.

deserving of serious attention are two-story masonry structures with symmetrical plans, regular features, and classically molded details. He also sustained Kimball's emphasis on Old World precedents for colonial designs. Writing at great length and in great detail about the largest and most expensively finished houses in colonial Virginia, Waterman concentrated on those that best conform to prototypes published in English patternbooks or erected on English soil.

In his 1939 essay "English Antecedents of Virginia Architecture," Waterman postulated a series of connections between English and Virginia houses that were much more specific than any Kimball had proposed.<sup>9</sup> Waterman argued that Rosewell in Gloucester County, Christ Church in Lancaster County, and several houses built by members of the Carter family closely resemble some contemporary academic buildings in the English province of Shropshire. Precisely how this "Shropshire School" of houses and public buildings came to be in Tidewater Virginia, Waterman was unprepared to explain. One connection, in Waterman's view, was John Prince who apparently designed Cound, a Shropshire mansion with distinct similarities, in plan and elevation, to Rosewell. Waterman speculated that Prince may have immigrated or dispatched architectural drawings to Virginia. In any case, eighteenth-century church and municipal rosters in Shropshire and nearby Herefordshire contain instances of such prominent Virginia surnames as Byrd, Carter, Hill, Lee, and Page. To Waterman, these "multiple relationships," were sufficient to "indicate that architectural similarities are to be expected."<sup>10</sup>

In 1945, Waterman published his most important work. The

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Tileston Waterman, "English Antecedents of Virginia Architecture," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 80 (January 1939), pp. 57-63.

<sup>10</sup> Waterman, "English Antecedents," p. 59.

Mansions of Virginia quickly became--and has long remained--the standard treatment of domestic architecture in colonial Virginia.<sup>11</sup> The book has endured in part because Waterman's detailed descriptions and evaluations of individual houses are based on his own impressive fieldwork. It also has remained influential because Waterman's categorization of Virginia houses conforms well to what has become the established scholarly understanding of successive trends in European classicism and their effect on elite architecture in early America.

The most arresting aspect of Mansions of Virginia, however, is Waterman's persistent effort to identify concrete instances of English prototypes and Virginia emulations. His text is peppered with references to the specific plates in eighteenth-century English patternbooks from which Virginia houses were shaped and embellished. Waterman attributed the famous south doorway at Westover in Charles City County to Plate XXVI in William Salmon's Palladio Londinensis, he matched the plan and elevation of Brandon in Prince George County to Plate 3 in Robert Morris's Select Architecture, and he traced the elevation of Mount Airy in Richmond County to Plate LVIII in James Gibbs's Book of Architecture (fig. 1).<sup>12</sup>

Patternbook attributions are plentiful in Mansions of Virginia, but Waterman also strove to establish ties between specific houses in England and Virginia. He reasserted the artistic relationship between Cound and Rosewell, and he made equivalent claims

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<sup>11</sup> In his recent and exhaustive review essay, Dell Upton acknowledged that Mansions of Virginia is still crucial to the field of architectural history as it is practiced in Virginia. Upton, "New Views of the Virginia Landscape," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 96 (October 1988), pp. 403-416.

<sup>12</sup> Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, pp. 150, 322-323, and 366. A photograph of Mount Airy appears in Chapter 4.

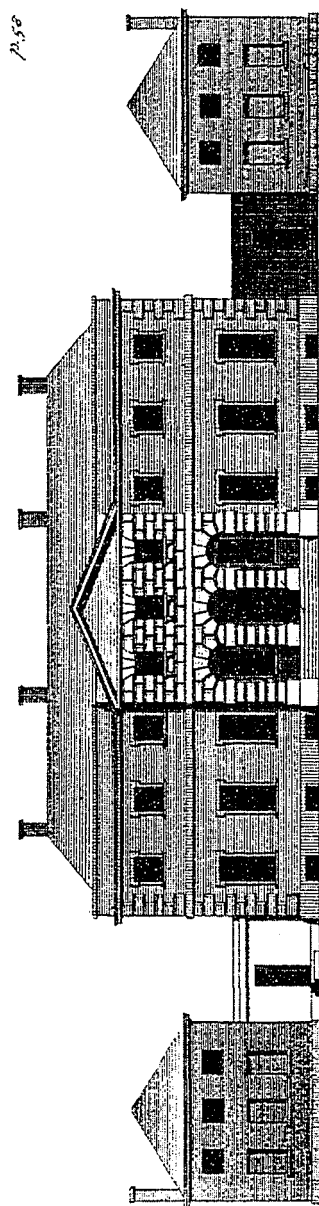


Fig. 1. "A Design Made for a Gentleman in Dorsetshire." Plate LVIII  
in James Gibbs, Book of Architecture, (London: 1828).

concerning the debt owed by the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg to Ashburnham house in London. Among his many other pairings is Drum House of Midlothian in Scotland and Blandfield in Essex County. In some cases, Waterman enhanced the similarities he perceived through drawings that "restored" original architectural features to the Virginia houses in question. For example, he endowed his perspective drawing of the Carlyle house in Alexandria with "conjectural" design features that increase its architectural kinship to Craigiehall, the Scottish country house that Waterman identified as its prototype (figs. 2 and 3).<sup>13</sup>

Waterman attempted to further account for the design of Virginia mansions by attributing many of them to builders with origins or experience in England. In this enterprise, he was inspired by the case of William Buckland, the English joiner and carver whose indentured service to George Mason of Gunston Hall in Fairfax County is well documented. There are also written records connecting Buckland to the construction or embellishment of two or three other Virginia buildings and to several houses in Annapolis, where he was working by 1771.<sup>14</sup> Assuming that Buckland was typical, Waterman set out to discover comparable careers for two other Virginia builders.

The first of these is Richard Taliaferro, a Williamsburg resident

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<sup>13</sup> Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, pp. 31, 106-109, 248, 262.

<sup>14</sup> Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, pp. 222-230. The most complete presentation of documentary evidence for Buckland's career and building projects is in Rosamond Randall Beirne and John Henry Scarff, William Buckland 1734-1774: Architect of Virginia and Maryland (Lorton and Annapolis: Gunston Hall and Hammond-Harwood House Association, 1958). The authors strained their credibility, however, when they employed Waterman's method, attributing to Buckland the design of several houses only on the grounds that his involvement "seems altogether possible," p. 42.

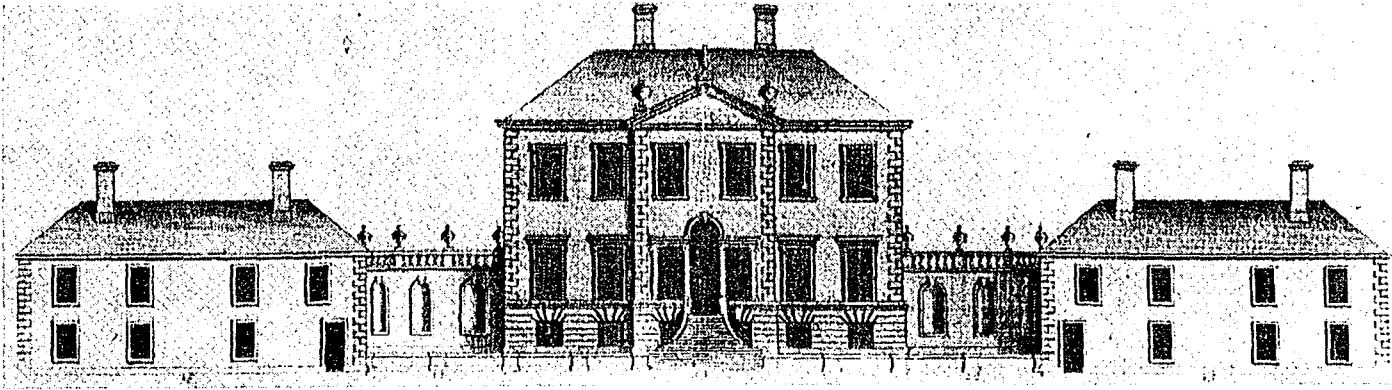


Fig. 2. Elevation of Craigiehall, Midlothian, Scotland, by William Adam, about 1725. From Thomas Tileston Waterman, The Mansions of Virginia, 1706-1776 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1945), p. 249.

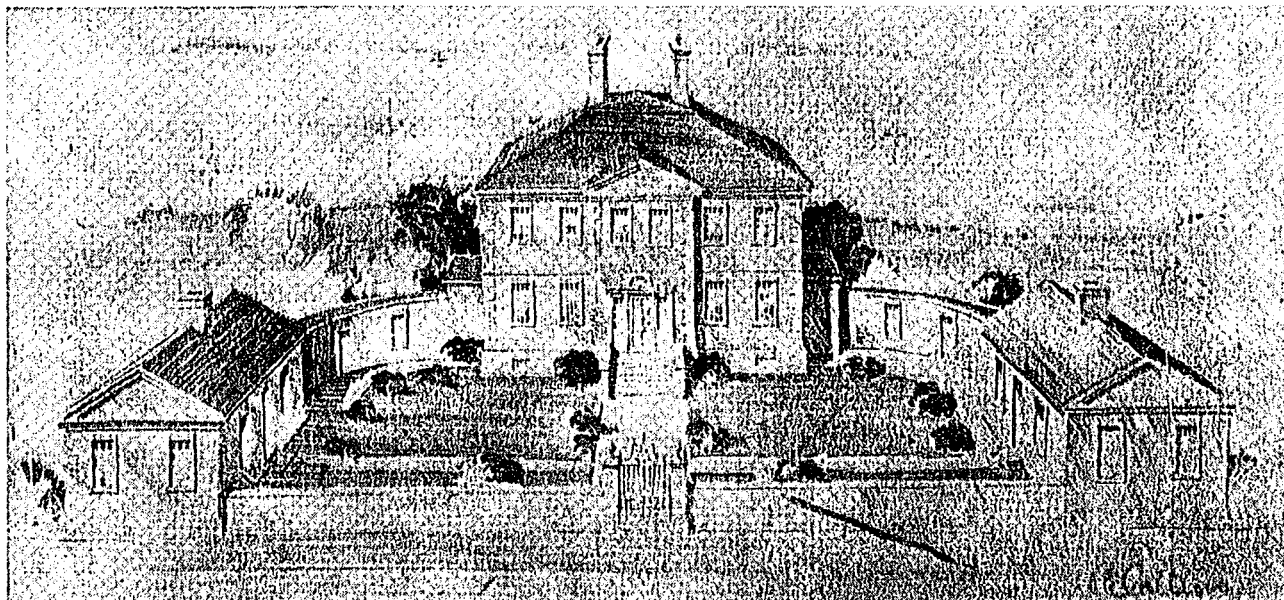


Fig. 3. Conjectural Perspective of the Carlyle House, Alexandria, Virginia. From Thomas Tileston Waterman, The Mansions of Virginia, 1706-1776 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1945), p. 249.

who may have been the craftsman characterized by one contemporary as "our most skillful architect."<sup>15</sup> For Taliaferro, Waterman postulated training in England and involvement, based on "certain stylistic mannerisms and derivation" with the design and construction of fifteen astonishingly diverse Virginia mansions.<sup>16</sup>

In 1751 John Ariss placed an advertisement in the Maryland Gazette announcing his arrival from Great Britain, his authorship of Bushfield in Westmoreland County, and his eagerness to undertake "buildings of all sorts and dimensions...in the neatest manner, (and at cheaper rates) either of the ancient or modern order of Gibbs' Architect."<sup>17</sup> From the evidence in this newspaper notice, Waterman supposed an illustrious career for Ariss that includes the design and construction of Mount Airy and eleven other Virginia houses. He links each of these structures to Ariss almost entirely on the basis of affinities in their form and details, and he summarizes a breathtakingly insubstantial argument with his assessment of Ariss as the "most important figure in the history of American Georgian architecture."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, p. 107. This passage appears in a letter written by Thomas Lee in 1749 concerning proposed alterations to the Governor's Palace. While Taliaferro is not named in the letter, he was involved subsequently with the addition of the Palace ballroom and supper room. See Marcus Whiffen, The Public Buildings of Williamsburg: Colonial Capital of Virginia (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1958), pp. 141-142.

<sup>16</sup> Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, pp. 103, 107, and 222. Claude Lanciano made Waterman's esteem for Taliaferro the basis of his book "Our Most Skillful Architect": Richard Taliaferro and Associated Colonial Virginia Constructions (Gloucester, Virginia: Lands End Books, 1981).

<sup>17</sup> Maryland Gazette 22 May 1751, cited in Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, p. 244.

<sup>18</sup> Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, pp. 243-248.



Published in 1960, Marcus Whiffen's book The Eighteenth-Century Houses of Williamsburg tacitly challenged the custom established by Kimball and Waterman of explaining Virginia domestic architecture through associations with English designs and designers. Whiffen acknowledged the "English ancestry" of houses in Virginia, but he emphasized the importance of locality--climate, laws, materials, and craftsmanship--in determining their distinctive character.<sup>19</sup> He confined his treatment of English patternbooks to those titles and editions advertised in Williamsburg's Virginia Gazette or listed in at least one early Virginia library. Whiffen also tempered his discussion of published European sources with the observation that while architectural publications sometimes formed the basis for certain Virginia designs, most functioned less directly, establishing only the general "standards and trends of taste."<sup>20</sup> In this sense, he modified the dictatorial status awarded to English precedents by Kimball and Waterman. He did, however, sustain and advance their belief that eighteenth-century Virginians approached the design of their houses as aesthetic problems--that they employed principles of design widely understood on both sides of the Atlantic to determine the appearance of their houses. As a result, the most memorable section in Houses of Williamsburg details the "geometrical methods of

<sup>19</sup> Whiffen, Eighteenth-Century Houses, p. 85. In discussing these matters, Whiffen drew heavily on the advice and experience of his colleagues at Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Paul Buchanan, for example, supplied Whiffen with much material concerning the characteristic methods by which early Virginia houses were framed and finished. See Paul E. Buchanan, "The Eighteenth-Century Frame Houses of Tidewater Virginia," Building Early America: Contributions toward the History of a Great Industry, Charles E. Peterson, editor, (Radnor, Pennsylvania: Chilton Book Company, 1976), pp. 54-73.

<sup>20</sup> Whiffen, Eighteenth-Century Houses, pp. 39-43.

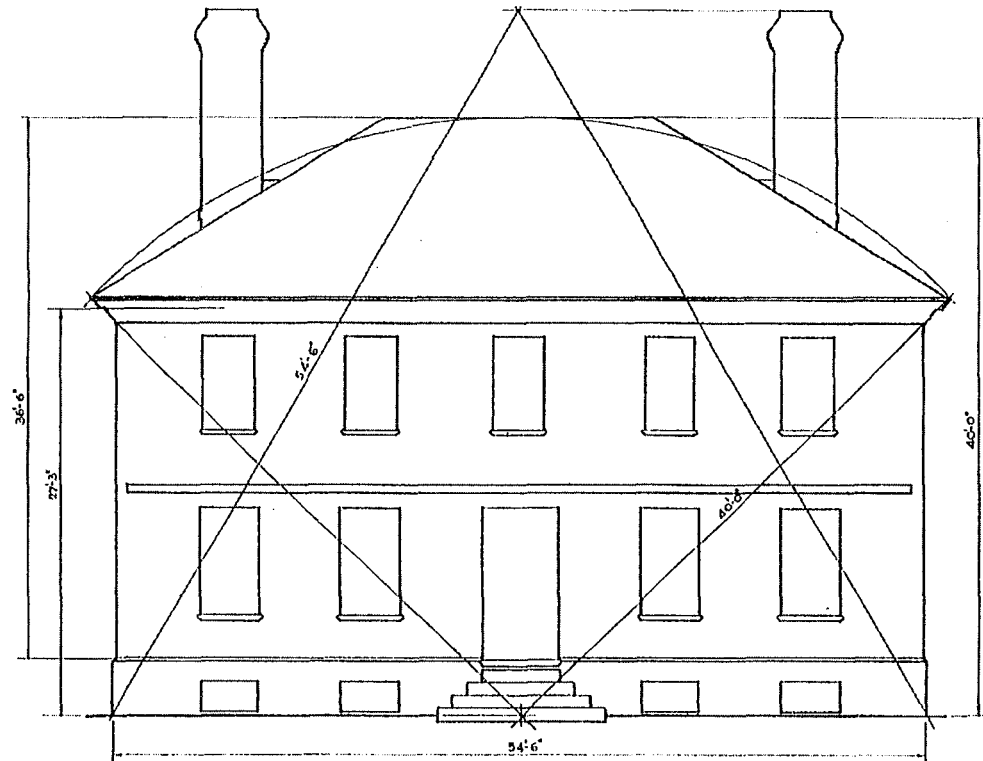


Fig. 4. Conjectural Geometric Proportions of the George Wythe House, Williamsburg, Virginia. From Marcus Whiffen, The Eighteenth-Century Houses of Williamsburg: A Study of Architecture and Building in the Colonial Capital of Virginia (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1960), p. 58.

proportioning" that account, in Whiffen's analysis, for the shape and scale of many prominent houses in the colonial capital (fig. 4).<sup>21</sup>

For many students of domestic architecture in Virginia, the story ends here. Like almost all popular discussions of the subject, David King Gleason's recent Virginia Plantation Homes deals exclusively with the sort of imposing structures that Waterman called "houses of pretention."<sup>22</sup> More comprehensive surveys like Mills Lane's Architecture of the Old South: Virginia keep in general circulation those subjects and methods of architectural analysis established by Kimball, Waterman, and Whiffen.<sup>23</sup>

While glossy "coffee-table" publications like Gleason's and Lane's require little scholarly justification for their conventional approach, such reinforcement is nevertheless readily available.<sup>24</sup> William Rasmussen is prominent among those contemporary scholars who structure their work around the issues of design and precedence inaugurated during the first half of this century. Rasmussen's analysis of Sabine Hall in Richmond County is dominated by an earnest but improbable argument that Landon Carter based the mansion's plan and elements of its facade on plates in

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<sup>21</sup> Whiffen, Eighteenth-Century Houses, pp. 56-59 and Whiffen, Public Buildings of Williamsburg, pp. 80-82 and 157-160. Paul Buchanan argued that a similar geometric system, one based on a series of sixteen-foot squares, accounts for the proportions of both elevations and plans at Stratford in Westmoreland County. Personal communication, 28 May 1991.

<sup>22</sup> David King Gleason, Virginia Plantation Homes (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989); Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, p. 27.

<sup>23</sup> Mills Lane, Architecture of the Old South: Virginia (Savannah: Beehive Press, 1987).

<sup>24</sup> The character and purpose of popular architectural literature is the subject of Camille Wells, "What Coffee-Table Books Really Say," Design Book Review 9 (Spring 1986) pp. 65-68.

Architettura, a multi-volume work written by Italian designer Sebastiano Serlio between 1537 and 1547.<sup>25</sup> His attempt to analyze Sabine Hall according to Whiffen's system of proportion is also lacking in persuasive power--and is seriously hampered by Sabine Hall's roofline, which was lowered during the early nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup>

Conventional ways of thinking about and assigning importance to Virginia houses find continuing support in The Making of Virginia Architecture, a recent and authoritative exhibition catalog authored jointly by Rasmussen and three fellow architectural historians.<sup>27</sup> In those essays that consider the colonial and early national periods, the authors anchor their analysis to the same concern for historical context that distinguished Whiffen's Houses of Williamsburg. But because this catalog is shaped around an exhibit of Virginia architectural drawings and models, it gives fresh energy to the custom of emphasizing large and expensive houses and of explaining them through their perceived association with European precedents and systems of design.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> William M. S. Rasmussen, "Sabine Hall: A Classical Villa in Virginia," (Ph. D. Dissertation: University of Delaware, 1980), pp. 70-73 and Rasmussen, "Sabine Hall, A Classical Villa in Virginia," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 39 (December 1980) pp. 286-296.

<sup>26</sup> Rasmussen, "Sabine Hall," (Dissertation), pp. 64-69; Rasmussen, "Sabine Hall," pp. 287-289.

<sup>27</sup> Charles E. Brownell, Calder Loth, William M. S. Rasmussen, and Richard Guy Wilson, The Making of Virginia Architecture (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992). This catalog accompanied "The Making of Virginia Architecture: Drawings and Models, 1719-1990" an exhibition organized by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia, 1992-1993.

<sup>28</sup> William Rasmussen and Charles Brownell are largely responsible for those sections of the catalog that cover the early architectural history of Virginia. Brownell's preoccupation with

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What place exists in this traditional scheme for the vernacular houses built during Virginia's colonial period? Fiske Kimball understood relatively small and ostensibly unpretentious houses like Smith's Fort in Surry County and the Thoroughgood house in Princess Anne County in evolutionary terms. In his view, Smith's Fort and the Thoroughgood house were purely utilitarian little structures with mid-seventeenth-century dates of construction.<sup>29</sup> Thus Kimball tacitly awarded them status in the architectural history of Virginia

European sources is confined to an essay devoted to the founding of the European classical tradition in America. Making of Virginia Architecture, pp. 34-81. Rasmussen's attempts to link Virginia house designs with European patternbooks is as ineffectual as ever, but his discussions of geometric and mathematical systems of proportion gain significance through his analysis of an eighteenth-century elevation--possibly drawn for Battersea in Dinwiddie County--on which pricking, scoring, and compass arcs are clearly discernible. Brownell, Loth, Rasmussen, and Wilson, Making of Virginia Architecture, pp. 139-140, 150-152, 198-199.

<sup>29</sup> Fiske Kimball, Domestic Architecture, pp. 38 and 50. A mid-seventeenth-century construction date for Smith's Fort appears supported by a 1677 document which states that there was a "fifty foot brick house" built somewhere on the same tract "about five or six and twenty years since." Thomas Pittman Deposition, Surry County, quoted in "The Oldest Brick House," William and Mary Quarterly 1st Series, 8 (1899-1900) pp. 151-152. Aspects of the dwelling's form and construction suggest, however, that it was actually built sometime after 1750. Dell Upton assigns to Smith's Fort a date of about 1775. See Upton, "Early Vernacular Architecture in Southeastern Virginia," (Ph. D. Dissertation: Brown University, 1980), p. 537. Recent dendrochronological study of the Thoroughgood house has proven inconclusive. While those involved with the project posit a 1685 date of construction for the house, it is probable that a post-1700 date will be verified in the end. Interview with T. Patrick Brennan, Director of Historic Sites, Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia, 8 June 1993.

as antecedents of the eighteenth-century mansions built after "the academic spirit and the academic architectural forms...won the upper hand."<sup>30</sup>

In developing his conclusions about early American architecture, Kimball supplemented his own fieldwork with secondary sources that were explicitly architectural in nature. Had he consulted contemporary historical scholarship, he would have found in Thomas J. Wertenbaker's Patrician and Plebeian in Virginia support for his sense that the relationship between vernacular and academic houses is sequential. Wertenbaker argued that seventeenth-century Virginians found their colonial society too raw, their channels of trade too faulty, their fortunes too freshly acquired to support the building of pretentious houses. He argued that most seventeenth-century Virginia dwellings must have been built largely of wood. He cited room-by-room inventories as evidence that they typically contained between one and seven rooms, and he observed that even the largest of these were organized for informal living, with beds placed in nearly every room. After 1700, Virginia "patricians" became sufficiently certain of their wealth and standing to spend time and money on elaborate houses. As a result, the "usual" number of rooms represented in eighteenth-century inventories increased to eight or more, while interior furnishings became correspondingly elegant and specialized.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Kimball, Domestic Architecture, p. 53.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Patrician and Plebeian in Virginia: Or the Origin and Development of the Social Classes of the Old Dominion (Charlottesville: privately printed, 1910), pp. 111-121. Wertenbaker drew his statements concerning inventories from Philip Alexander Bruce, Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century (New York: Macmillan Company, 1895), v. 2, pp. 145-175. While houses with numerous rooms are well represented in both seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Virginia inventories, no systematic reading of these documents would yield the impression

Thirty years later, Louis B. Wright's First Gentlemen of Virginia subtly reinforced Wertenbaker's evolutionary perspective on Virginia housing. In this description of the origin and development of Virginia gentility, Wright pointed out that seventeenth-century planters such as William Byrd I and Ralph Wormeley II often admired and acquired rich furnishings, but they used them to embellish decidedly unpretentious dwellings. To Wright, seventeenth-century houses like William Fitzhugh's "rambling frame building" at Bedford in Stafford County were both the devices and the symbols of purposeful dynasty-builders who were more concerned with amassing wealth than displaying it.<sup>32</sup> The "handsome brick houses" their fortunate sons began to construct after 1700 were equally significant as devices and symbols of gentility attained. Furnished with the finest of imported accoutrements, these mansions were the appropriate settings for William Byrd II and other "brilliant exemplifications" of an "aristocracy that had been slowly evolving" during Virginia's first century.<sup>33</sup>

To a significant extent, Wright was correct to suggest a generational sequence of construction: most of those Virginia families who rose to prominence during the latter half of the seventeenth century clearly deferred mansion-building until the eighteenth century, when their political and economic fortunes seemed secure.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, some wealthy seventeenth-century that a house of six or more rooms was "typical." See Chapters 2 and 3 for more on this subject.

<sup>32</sup> Louis B. Wright, The First Gentlemen of Virginia: Intellectual Qualities of the Early Colonial Ruling Class (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1940), pp. 161-162, 191, and 317.

<sup>33</sup> Wright, First Gentlemen of Virginia, pp. 330, 347.

<sup>34</sup> Dell Upton persuasively restated this interpretation in "Reclaiming the Golden Horseshoe: Our Next Decade" keynote address presented at the annual meeting of the Vernacular Architecture Forum in Staunton, Virginia, 16 May 1988.

planters did construct large houses designed according to relatively current English architectural tastes. Bacon's Castle in Surry County was built by Arthur Allen in 1665.<sup>35</sup> The first Lewis Burwell probably built Fairfield in Gloucester County at about the same time.<sup>36</sup> Benjamin Henry Latrobe's 1796 watercolor of Green Spring indicates that this James City County seat of Governor William Berkeley had achieved its imposing form before the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Stephenson B. Andrews, editor, Bacon's Castle (Richmond: Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, 1984).

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Waterman dated Fairfield, which burned toward the end of the nineteenth century, to 1692. However, Fairfield bore stylistic similarities to Bacon's Castle, for which dendrochronological analysis has confirmed a construction date of 1665. Moreover, Lewis Burwell had acquired the Gloucester County tract on which the house was built by 1654. Thus a construction date for Fairfield during the third quarter of the seventeenth century is likely. Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, p. 23. Nell M. Nugent, Cavaliers and Pioneers (Richmond: Dietz Printing Company, 1934), v. 1, p. 392.

<sup>37</sup> Excavation of the Green Spring site yielded the remains of a house that was built in several campaigns. Archaeologists assumed that what appeared to be the earliest section dated from the tenure of Governor William Berkeley. Louis R. Caywood, "Green Spring Plantation," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 65 (January 1957), pp. 67-83. Much of the house may actually have been built after Berkeley's death, although Latrobe sketched characteristics that suggest seventeenth-century rather than eighteenth-century construction. Prominent among these are the shaped gables of the dwelling's advanced entrance bay. Edward C. Carter II, John C. Van Horne, and Charles E. Brownell, editors, Latrobe's View of America, 1795-1820 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 100-102. Cary Carson has associated decorative molded brickwork of this sort with Artisan Mannerism, a style of architecture that found favor in Virginia and elsewhere in the American colonies during the latter half of the seventeenth century. Carson, "Public Architecture in the



Just as seventeenth-century Virginia houses might be substantial and elaborate, so eighteenth-century houses could be small and unpretentious. Indeed, it is clear that dwellings of this general description continued to dominate Virginia's landscape after 1700 just as they had before. Still, the evolutionary approach to Virginia's academic and vernacular housing retains much currency. One recent and influential proponent is Henry Chandlee Forman. In Virginia Architecture in the Seventeenth Century and The Virginia Eastern Shore and Its British Origins, Forman assigned to many small Virginia houses--including such decidedly eighteenth-century houses as Pear Valley in Northampton County and Sweet Hall in King William County--both seventeenth-century origins and status in his anachronistic "medieval style" of Virginia architecture.<sup>38</sup> Seventeenth-century dates of construction for many Virginia houses are also periodically reasserted in popular surveys like Anne M. Faulconer's The Virginia House.<sup>39</sup>

While most studies of Virginia's domestic architecture represent high-style houses as aesthetically superior to traditional dwellings, not all of them explain the relationship between academic and vernacular houses as a matter of evolution. In Mansions of Virginia, Waterman followed Kimball in contrasting American Colonies," paper presented at the Fortieth Antiques Forum at Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia, 3 February 1988.

<sup>38</sup> Henry Chandlee Forman, Virginia Architecture in the Seventeenth Century, Jamestown 350th Anniversary Historical Booklet No. 11 (Williamsburg: Jamestown-Williamsburg-Yorktown Celebration Commission, 1957); Henry Chandlee Forman, The Virginia Eastern Shore and Its British Origins: History, Gardens, and Antiquities (Easton, Maryland: Eastern Shore Publishers' Associates, 1975).

<sup>39</sup> Anne M. Faulconer, The Virginia House: A Home for Three Hundred Years (Exton, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing, 1984).

Virginia's eighteenth-century "era of great houses" with the previous century, during which "traditional architecture was practically the universal building expression."<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, he acknowledged the continued construction, throughout Virginia's colonial period, of "purely traditional buildings...that have more native quality than formal designs."<sup>41</sup>

This perception that vernacular architectural conventions remained vital even after Virginians became proficient in their understanding of European academic trends gained little ground until the early 1950s, when Carl Bridenbaugh published in Myths and Realities his vivid portrait of colonial Virginia's hierarchical society.<sup>42</sup> Bridenbaugh acknowledged that slaves and free blacks represented nearly half of the Virginia population, but his interest was principally in colonists of European origin. He identified five distinct classes of white Virginians. The lowest of these were convicts and indentured servants. Besting these bound laborers in social and economic terms were "poor whites" whom Bridenbaugh characterized as lazy but "kind and hospitable." Ranking above the two lowest classes were "lesser planters" who owned small parcels of land which they tended with "their own labor or perhaps with the

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<sup>40</sup> Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, pp. 19, 29.

<sup>41</sup> Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, p. 222. This passage is significant to the understanding of academic and traditional housing in hierarchical terms, but it is important to emphasize that Waterman's notion of a "medium-sized" colonial Virginia dwelling includes such substantial gentry houses as Toddsbury in Gloucester County, Gunston Hall in Fairfax County, and Ditchley in Northumberland County. A ranking of these eighteenth-century houses by measures of wealth reveals that they were built by the richest class of planters in Virginia. For more on this subject, see Chapter 4.

<sup>42</sup> Carl Bridenbaugh, Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952).

aid of from one to five or ten slaves." Better-off still were "comfortably prosperous planters" who owned between 200 and 500 acres of land as well as a quantity of slaves--more than ten. Highest-ranking of all were members of the "patrician order" whose wealth in land and slaves made them "something approximating an American aristocracy."<sup>43</sup>

Eighteenth-century Virginia society had been described before, but Bridenbaugh was the first to attempt more than a simple differentiation between great and small planters.<sup>44</sup> He was, moreover, the first to develop a characterization based on land and slaves as measures of wealth. Bridenbaugh's discussion of early Virginia society is also remarkable in that he used domestic architecture as one means of differentiation. Wealthy Virginians--the Burwells, Carters, Randolphs, and Lees--demonstrated their social and economic superiority through the construction of "imposing mansions." Modestly prosperous planters, by contrast, built small but substantial dwellings like the "four-room, story-and-a-half house with a brick chimney" that stood on Thomas Hall's 230-acre plantation in Prince George County.<sup>45</sup> Descriptive

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<sup>43</sup> Bridenbaugh, Myths and Realities, pp. 6-10.

<sup>44</sup> In his earliest study, Thomas J. Wertenbaker sorted all seventeenth-century landholding Virginians into two categories: the aristocracy and the middle class. Wertenbaker, Patrician and Plebeian. In Planters of Colonial Virginia, he devoted more attention to the "small planting class" he thought was largely supplanted by great slaveholding planters before the end of the eighteenth century. Wertenbaker, The Planters of Colonial Virginia (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1922).

<sup>45</sup> Bridenbaugh, Myths and Realities, pp. 9-10. Although he did not note the primary source, Bridenbaugh's information concerning Thomas Hall's house and plantation came from an advertisement in the Virginia Gazette. Hall advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Parks), 12 December 1745, p. 4, c. 1. With ground dimensions of 44 by 28

passages such as these not only contributed to a more concrete depiction of eighteenth-century Virginia's stratified society. They also helped to portray an early Virginia landscape where academic and vernacular building conventions coexisted--where, Bridenbaugh wrote, "mansion house and small dwelling rose side by side."<sup>46</sup>

In 1975 Henry Glassie used Bridenbaugh's Myths and Realities as one point of departure for Folk Housing in Middle Virginia. Glassie accepted Bridenbaugh's distinctions among poor and wealthy colonists as well as his perception of the hierarchical relationship between houses of academic and vernacular design, but he reversed the customary emphasis on elite Virginians and their "pretentious houses." Scanning the small farms and plain dwellings of Louisa and Goochland Counties, Glassie wrote "if this land and the people who made it have no place in the historical record, then the worth of the study of history must be called sharply into question."<sup>47</sup>

In Folk Housing, Glassie began with a set of rural dwellings in one section of Piedmont Virginia.<sup>48</sup> He carefully recorded each feet, six rooms, and two brick chimneys, Hall's house was actually somewhat more substantial than Bridenbaugh indicated. He was also considerably better-off than Bridenbaugh surmised. While his dwelling plantation encompassed only 230 acres, the four plantations he offered for sale amounted to a total of 1330 acres. Property this extensive gave Hall standing among the wealthiest 10 percent of all planters who advertised land in the Virginia Gazette. For more on this colonial newspaper as a source for Virginia domestic architecture, see Chapter 3.

<sup>46</sup> Bridenbaugh, Myths and Realities, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> Henry Glassie, Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), p. 7.

<sup>48</sup> Glassie was evasive about construction dates for many of the structures he recorded, but it is clear he thought his study represented the housing traditions of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth centuries. Most veterans of architectural fieldwork in

house with notes and drawings. Then he drew on recent scholarship in the field of linguistics to discover the "logic" by which these vernacular houses could appear fundamentally similar in form and scale, yet individually distinct in plan and elevation.<sup>49</sup> He argued that all of the recorded houses were planned from units of space, just as all words, phrases, and sentences are composed of morphemes. Some units of space--the fifteen-foot square for example--functioned like free morphemes: they could stand alone as a one-room dwelling or they could be linked with other units of space to form a dwelling with a larger and more complex plan. Other units of space, such as the nine-by-fifteen-foot rectangle, were like bound morphemes in that they made their architectural appearance only in combination with one or more other units.<sup>50</sup>

The shape of architectural space was the matter that concerned Glassie most, but he also examined such dwelling components as door and window openings, framing, chimneys, and roof in an attempt to account for every aspect of the vernacular building tradition in the Southeast now recognize that none of the dwellings Glassie recorded was built before 1800--some were even built after 1900. George McDaniel was the first to point out this problem in his review of Folk Housing for the Journal of American Folklore 91 (July-September 1978) pp. 851-853. Dell Upton made the same point in his 1988 review essay "New Views," p. 436.

<sup>49</sup> Glassie cited the work of Noam Chomsky as fundamental to his thinking. Glassie, Folk Housing, pp. 18, 215-216.

<sup>50</sup> Glassie, Folk Housing, pp. 19-40. In identifying and combining his units of architectural space, Glassie did not acknowledge his debt to the linguistic practice of establishing and linking units of language, but the connection is obvious. He was influenced here by James Deetz, who compared the components of a language to the attributes of an artifact--and even adapted the linguistic terminology to his own purposes--in Invitation to Archaeology (Garden City, New York: Natural History Press, 1967), pp. 83-101.

early Virginia. Once his description of architectural elements seemed complete, Glassie then worked out the set of rules--the architectural grammar--that guided their assembly into houses. Drawing again on the theories of language, Glassie summarized these architectural components and rules for their combination as the "architectural competence" of middle Virginia (fig. 5).<sup>51</sup>

Glassie's next enterprise--the one that occupies the latter sections of Folk Housing--was to observe the "performance" of traditional Virginia builders and inhabitants in the use of their architectural language. To articulate his perceptions, he followed the structuralist technique of sorting objects and their characteristics according to sets of opposing terms. He found through this method that ordinary Virginia housing gradually became less public and more private, less natural and more artificial, less variable and more repetitive, less extensive and more intensive (fig. 6).<sup>52</sup> Since architecture is a significant form of cultural expression, Glassie argued, these changes in housing represent a fundamental shift in ways of thinking and living in middle Virginia. Over the course of the study period, he wrote, Virginians evolved from open, trusting members of a close-knit community to isolated, suspicious inhabitants of an impersonal society.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Glassie, Folk Housing, pp. 17, pp. 19-40. Glassie has recently modified his stance concerning the usefulness of analyzing buildings exactly as if they were constructed in exactly the same way as a language. He has said: "You cannot build a sentence. You cannot speak a house." Glassie, "History and the Vernacular House," lecture presented at the Commonwealth Center for the Study of American Culture, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, 9 November 1989.

<sup>52</sup> Glassie, Folk Housing, pp. 8-12, 41-42, 216-217.

<sup>53</sup> Glassie was influenced in this conclusion by the deeply romantic notion that the task of the folklorist is to discover and record remnants of a vanished past that is not just different from

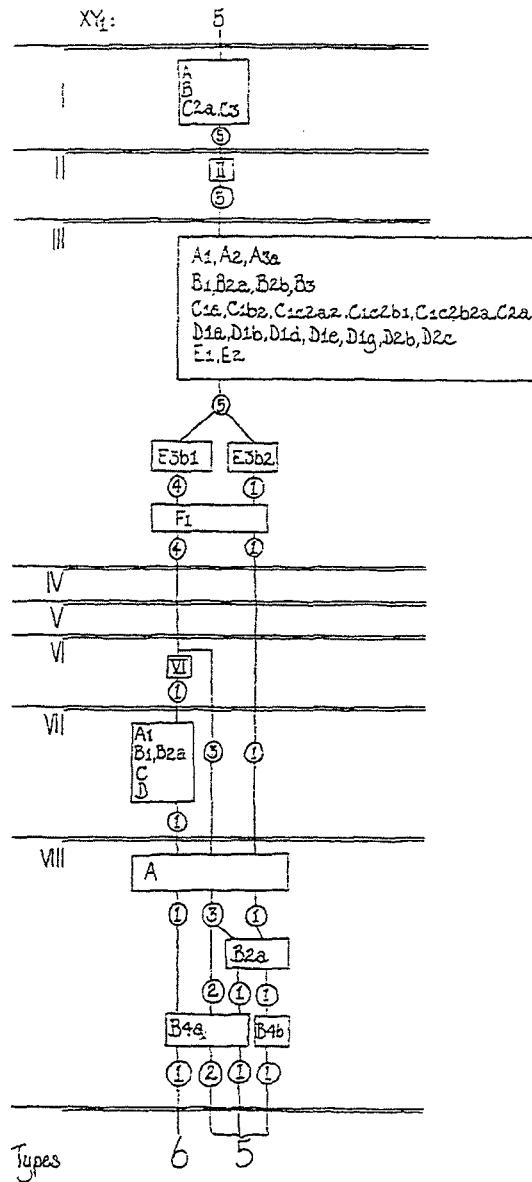


Fig. 5. Diagram of a Traditional Architectural Grammar Transformed into a House Type. From Henry Glassie, Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), p. 49.

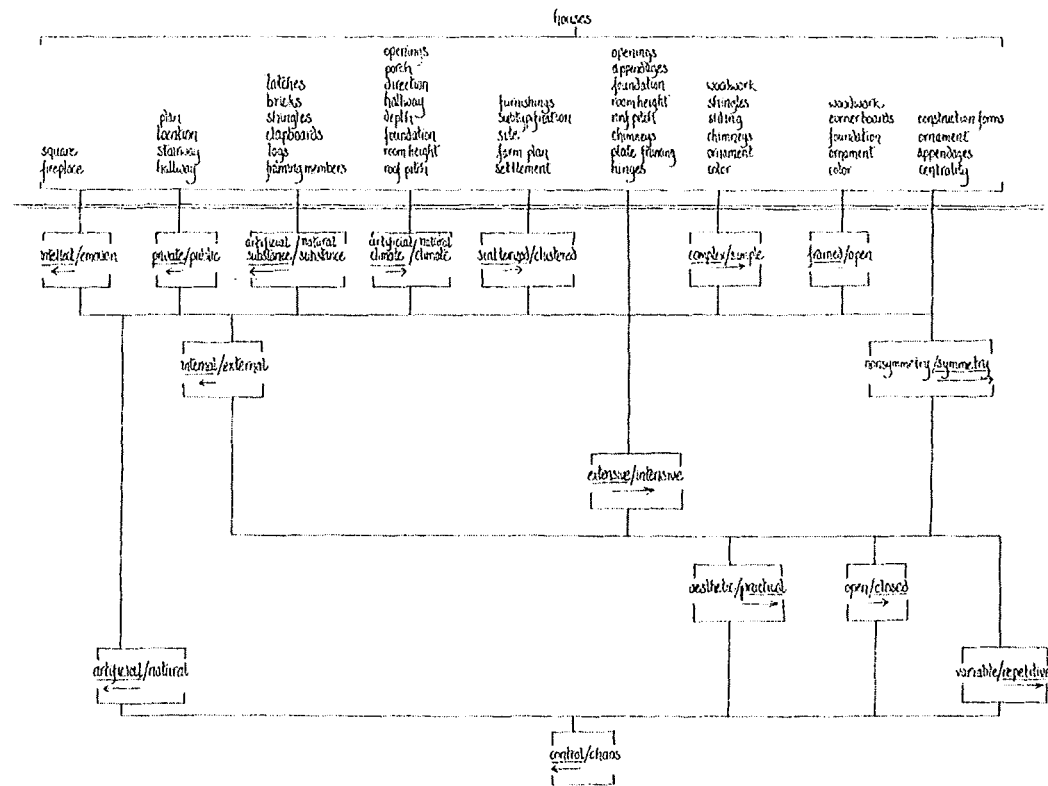


Fig. 6. Diagram of Extensive and Intensive Architectural Design Choices. From Henry Glassie, Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), p. 161.



Glassie's system for perceiving and explaining Virginia houses has never been duplicated successfully.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, his romantically revisionist claim for the inherent integrity--even moral superiority--of traditional housing provoked a hostile new edge to the longstanding scholarly distinction between high-style and vernacular architecture. Nevertheless, Folk Housing enjoys deserved status as a pathbreaking and important work. Glassie was the first scholar of Virginia domestic architecture to subject traditional dwellings to the kind of serious attention that architectural historians had previously reserved for houses with high-style attributes. He also demonstrated the value of examining houses as enclosures of space, rather than as facades or accumulations of decorative detail. Furthermore, Glassie pressed the study of early Virginia houses past narrow, condescending concerns for precedence and influence. Since the publication of Folk Housing, it has become acceptable to "read" early Virginia houses for evidence concerning the ways of life and habits of mind common the present but, in its traditional practices and communal relations, manifestly superior. His sense of a cohesive community breaking apart into a fragmented society is also drawn from theories concerning the evolution of human society that have been articulated in such sociological writings as Ferdinand Toennies, Community and Society, Charles P. Loomis, translator, (New York: Harper Books, 1963) and codified for historians in Cyril E. Black, The Dynamics of Modernization (New York: Harper Books, 1967). Richard D. Brown's influential application of these ideas to the American past appeared after Folk Housing was published. See Brown, Modernization: The Transformation of American Life 1600-1865 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976).

<sup>54</sup> One clear attempt to apply Glassie's approach to a different set of early Virginia houses is Bernard L. Herman and David G. Orr, "Pear Valley et al.: An Excursion into the Analysis of Southern Vernacular Architecture," Southern Folklore Quarterly 39 (December 1975), pp. 307-327.

among the people who made and used them.<sup>55</sup>

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While it is still popular in some quarters to classify early Virginia houses as either academic or vernacular, this tidily discrete pair of architectural categories no longer prevails. The best new scholarship is based on the proposition that important similarities exist among all of the houses--small and large, plain and elaborate--built at the same time and in the same place. These recent studies of early Virginia architecture are not meant to suggest that colonial dwellings are all alike--or that their differences are insignificant. They argue, rather, that architectural distinctions are best explained as differing responses to the social, economic, political, or cultural imperatives that affected life for all eighteenth-century Virginians.

Scholars who analyze buildings as manifestations of a specific historical context--and in terms of the needs, priorities, constraints, and opportunities of their makers and users--often identify their work as contributions to a "new architectural history." Despite its name, this enterprise has little to do with the thinking and writing of architectural historians who emphasize academic architectural expression, for whom questions surrounding the issue of aesthetic achievement remain paramount. The new architectural history has developed instead from the work of scholars who, during the 1970s, became assertive about their interest in vernacular architecture--those ordinary buildings that conventional architectural historians routinely ignore.<sup>56</sup> Within a decade, their

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<sup>55</sup> A recent and significant analysis of Glassie's contribution to the study of American architecture is in Dell Upton, "Outside the Academy: A Century of Vernacular Architecture Studies 1890-1990," Architectural Historian in America, McDougall, editor, pp. 199-213.

<sup>56</sup> Many of these scholars of vernacular architecture became founders or early members of the Vernacular Architecture Forum

scholarship had addressed so many sorts of questions about so many kinds of buildings that the designation "vernacular architecture" began to seem outmoded. One essay written during the middle of the 1980s observed: "though the term denotes nothing more than a kind of subject matter," it has come also to represent a "mixture of evidence, method, and theory" as well.<sup>57</sup> Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman dealt explicitly with the transformation of vernacular architecture from a means of classifying buildings to an approach to their study in their 1989 essay "Toward a New Architectural History."<sup>58</sup> Dell Upton also introduced the term "new architectural history" in an essay that chronicles the history of vernacular architecture studies and their contribution to the discipline of architectural history. He wrote: "in the absence of serious challengers, perhaps vernacular architecture studies can claim the title the new architectural history."<sup>59</sup> Prominent among those who have created and advanced the new architectural history are many scholars of housing in early Virginia. While their work is based in large measure on what they have learned and what they have found unsatisfactory in the work of Kimball, Waterman, Whiffen, and Glassie, these scholars are also beneficiaries of trends in the study of Virginia history and archaeology as well.

which was founded in 1980. The history of this organization is described briefly in Camille Wells, "Old Claims and New Demands: Vernacular Architecture Studies Today," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture II, Camille Wells, editor, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), pp. 1-10.

<sup>57</sup> Wells, "Old Claims and New Demands," p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, "Toward a New Architectural History," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture IV, Carter and Herman, editors, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), pp. 1-6.

<sup>59</sup> Upton, "Outside the Academy," p. 210.

Virginia's colonial past, like its colonial architecture, has been the subject of sustained scholarly and antiquarian attention since the late nineteenth century. Moreover, the preoccupations that have traditionally guided the work of Virginia historians and archaeologists--the English origins of Virginia traditions, the rise of a genteel culture, the emergence of revolutionary ideology--correspond well to the themes that dominate traditional discussions of early Virginia's architecture. While the buildings that Virginia architectural historians were willing to discuss and the tools of investigation they were willing to use remained the same, the topics and methodologies that governed discussions of the historical and archaeological record have gradually deepened and improved. By the early 1960s, historical analyses like Sigmund Diamond's "From Organization to Society," Arthur Pierce Middleton's Tobacco Coast, and the Browns's Virginia 1705-1786 had appeared. These works demonstrated how the treatment of Virginia's colonial past had evolved from the rather impressionistic reading of anecdotal evidence that characterized the work of Thomas J. Wertenbaker and Louis B. Wright to an increasingly copious and systematic consultation of the documentary record.<sup>60</sup>

Historical archaeology has made comparable progress. Early twentieth-century excavations such as those undertaken at

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<sup>60</sup> Sigmund Diamond, "From Organization to Society: Virginia in the Seventeenth Century," American Journal of Sociology 63 (March 1958), pp. 457-475; Arthur Pierce Middleton, Tobacco Coast: A Maritime History of the Chesapeake Bay in the Colonial Era (Newport News, Virginia: Mariner's Museum, 1953); Robert E. Brown and B. Katherine Brown, Virginia 1705-1786: Aristocracy or Democracy? (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964). The best historiography of colonial Virginia is Thad W. Tate, "The Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake and Its Modern Historians," The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society and Politics, Tate and David L. Ammerman, editors, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), pp. 3-50.

Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Wakefield were conducted much like treasure hunts for the structural remains of significant colonial landmarks.<sup>61</sup> By the middle of the century, however, a more thoughtful and analytical approach to historical archaeology was taking hold. J. C. Harrington's influential proposition that colonial pipe stems--if carefully collected and rigorously examined--can be used to date colonial sites and his thoughtful meditation on the archaeologist's responsibility to the historical record mark the beginning of an era in which historical archaeology in Virginia involves painstaking investigation of each site's stratigraphy and analysis of its entire artifactual harvest.<sup>62</sup> Ivor Noel Hume, who transformed the Department of Archaeology at Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, standardized the thorough and historically

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<sup>61</sup> H. Summerfield Day, Preliminary Archaeological Report on Excavations at Jamestown, Virginia (Yorktown: Colonial National Historical Park Permanent File Number 740-02, 1935); Prentice Duell, Archaeological Report on Excavations for the Summer Season 1930 (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archaeological Report, 1930); Charles E. Hatch, Jr., Popes Creek Plantation: Birthplace of George Washington (Washington's Birthplace, Virginia: Wakefield National Memorial Association, 1979).

<sup>62</sup> J. C. Harrington, "Dating Stem Fragments of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Clay Tobacco Pipes," Quarterly Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Virginia 9 (September 1954), pp. 9-13; J. C. Harrington, "Archaeology as an Auxiliary Science to American History," American Anthropologist 57 (December 1955), pp. 1121-1130. Ivor Noel Hume contrasted early and later methods of excavation and analysis in his Historical Archaeology (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), pp. 68-114. For a good recent historiography of Virginia archaeology, see Carter L. Hudgins, "Seventeenth-Century Virginia and Its Twentieth-Century Archaeologists," The Archaeology of Seventeenth-Century Virginia, Theodore R. Reinhart and Dennis J. Pogue, editors, (Courtland, Virginia: Archaeological Society of Virginia, 1993), pp. 167-182.

thoughtful new approach to archaeology in Historical Archaeology: A Comprehensive Guide and A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America. These two books, which appeared in 1968 and 1969, have become standard texts in the field.<sup>63</sup>

Investigative trends in both colonial history and historical archaeology were enhanced with fresh intellectual purpose during the late 1960s: a growing awareness of deep-rooted and longstanding inequalities in modern American society generated concern that investigations of the American past were similarly skewed in favor of those with exceptional access to wealth and power.<sup>64</sup> New histories were framed and researched to emphasize the experience of common people and the character of their everyday lives. They were intended to correct discriminative treatment of the past, just as newly enacted and enforced civil rights legislation was designed to correct discriminative conditions in the present. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, historians like Lois Carr, Lorena Walsh, Alan Kulikoff, Darrett and Anita Rutman published conclusions based on their exhaustive scrutiny of seemingly

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<sup>63</sup> Ivor Noel Hume, Historical Archaeology: A Comprehensive Guide (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968) and Ivor Noel Hume, A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969).

<sup>64</sup> See Peter N. Stearns, "Toward a Wider Vision: Trends in Social History," The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States, Michael Kammen, editor, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 205-230 and Peter N. Stearns, "The New Social History: An Overview," Ordinary People and Everyday Life: Perspectives on the New Social History, James B. Gardner and George Rollie Adams, editors, (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1983), pp. 3-22. The impact of recent social historical analyses on the study and interpretation of colonial Virginia houses is addressed briefly in Camille Wells, "Interior Designs: Room Furnishings and Historical Interpretations at Colonial Williamsburg," Southern Quarterly 31 (Spring 1993), pp. 88-111.

mundane aspects of colonial Chesapeake society and economy. From their work has emerged an early Virginia dominated by tobacco-growing settlers with short spans of life, rude material circumstances, and a decidedly provincial view of the world.<sup>65</sup>

In restoring the hardscrabble plantations and sickly but dogged planters to the colonial landscape, most social histories of the early Chesapeake have remained descriptive in tone and local in focus. Some recent scholars, however, have not been content merely to write monographs that correct and extend modern comprehension of day-to-day life in colonial Maryland and Virginia. Instead, they have brought their new insights and new findings to bear on the task of recasting the experience of colonial Virginians and the evolution of colonial Virginia as significant components of early American

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<sup>65</sup> Social historians of colonial Maryland and Virginia are formidable in their numbers and achievements. Their scholarship is correspondingly vast and still growing. A good introduction to this literature is Tate and Ammerman's collection The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century. Major works by Chesapeake social historians include Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia 1650-1750 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984) and Allan Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986). Collaborative research and essay-length analyses of quantitative material have dominated recent Chesapeake social history. These two characteristics contribute to the strength of Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo, editors, Colonial Chesapeake Society (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) and Lois Green Carr, Russell R. Menard, and Lorena S. Walsh, Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1991). A recent and authoritative critique of social historical analysis of colonial Maryland and Virginia is Anita H. Rutman, "Still Planting the Seeds of Hope: The Recent Literature of the Early Chesapeake Region," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 95 (January 1987) pp. 3-24.

history. No longer is the story of early Virginia a benign account of English civilization adapting to the New World, where it generated, during its adjustment to the monarch-free environment, an increasingly idealistic concern for natural rights and individual freedom.<sup>66</sup> Revisionist historians explain colonial Virginia as ground contested--often bitterly, sometimes violently--by settlers who came to the colony with different sorts of expectations. There are many facets to this enterprise, but to these historians, the story of early Virginia ultimately is the story of institutions and customs deliberately constructed to secure the authority and insure the opportunity of a few well-placed, well-prepared immigrants and their descendants at the expense of most colonists--white as well as black.

This new understanding of Virginia's beginnings and its significance is most powerfully proposed and most convincingly supported by Edmund Morgan's American Slavery, American Freedom and Rhys Isaac's Transformation of Virginia. Focusing on the seventeenth century, Morgan explained colonial Virginia as the result of three seminal events: the search for a staple crop, the acquisition of a reliable labor force, and the development of a durable justification for a colonial society in which access to opportunity was profoundly unequal.<sup>67</sup> Rhys Isaac considered the eighteenth-century world that emerged from the "ordeal" Morgan described. In Transformation of Virginia, Isaac characterized Virginia's wealthy landed elite as socially and politically dominant but deeply insecure. Thus they were easily discomfited by the

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<sup>66</sup> Louis B. Wright's First Gentlemen of Virginia is one study representative of this tradition. Another influential contribution to this general scenario is Charles S. Sydnor, Gentlemen Freeholders (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1952).

<sup>67</sup> Edmund Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975).



radical and leveling ideology with which Virginia's common planters began to replace their traditional stance of deference toward the Tidewater gentry in the years just before the Revolution.<sup>68</sup>

Virginia's new architectural historians have benefitted from recent developments in both social history and historical archaeology in several respects. From social historians, architectural historians of early Virginia have learned techniques for counting and sorting the quantifiable information often contained in colonial documents. They also have learned how to scrutinize historical sources for evidence of habits, intentions, and perceptions other than those their colonial authors meant to express.<sup>69</sup> Historical archaeologists have provided architectural historians with the analytical methods for a newly rigorous form of architectural fieldwork. Many architectural historians of early Virginia are veterans of training or field experience in historical archaeology. As a result, they often approach standing Virginia buildings as if they were archaeological sites with layered

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<sup>68</sup> Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

<sup>69</sup> One excellent quantitative analysis of colonial documents that pertains--although indirectly--to houses and their furnishings is Lois G. Carr and Lorena Walsh, "Inventories and the Analysis of Wealth and Consumption Patterns in St. Mary's County, Maryland 1658-1777," Historical Methods 13 (Spring 1980) pp. 81-104. Rhys Isaac has demonstrated how it is possible to discern the character of Virginia's gentry and the complexity of their relations with their slaves by reading between the lines of an eighteenth-century document such as Landon Carter's diary. Isaac, "Ethnographic Method in History: An Action Approach," Historical Methods 13 (1980), pp. 43-61, reprinted in Robert Blair St. George, editor, Material Culture in America 1600-1860 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp. 39-62. These works, among others, have influenced the quantitative and textual analysis of historical documents in Chapters 3 and 4.

manifestations of successive periods of occupation. Assuming that every sort of construction, use, and alteration leaves behind physical evidence, they pay close attention to even small and barely perceptible marks in the form and fabric of a building.<sup>70</sup>

By treating their sources according to methods learned from social historians and historical archaeologists, scholars of early Virginia's architecture have uncovered new and sometimes unique evidence about colonial Virginians. Moreover, by posing their questions and framing their answers as do historians and archaeologists, the new architectural historians have achieved excellence in their thinking and writing. Like social historians and historical archaeologists, they argue for the significance of studies that focus on the domestic life, social practices, economic realities, and ideological imperatives of colonial Virginians of every station, gender, and race.

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It is in their analysis of the colonial Chesapeake's pervasive and longstanding tradition of earthfast construction that the new architectural historians first distinguished themselves. Moreover, it is from their analysis of earthfast construction that these scholars have launched a systematic revision of early Virginia's architectural history that involves theoretical and methodological as well as substantial contributions. During the early 1970s, archaeologists in Maryland and Virginia began to recognize the dark round or oblong stains they found arranged in square or rectangular

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<sup>70</sup> This technique of "building archaeology," though not so named, is well described in Dell Upton's "New View of the Virginia Landscape," p. 417. The results, in terms of a descriptive, analytical record drawings, are best outlined in Edward A. Chappell, "Architectural Recording and the Open-Air Museum: A View from the Field," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture II, Wells, editor, pp. 24-36.

configurations in the subsoil of seventeenth-century sites as the remains of houses constructed on posts set directly into the ground.<sup>71</sup> Gradually it became clear, through documentary as well as archaeological research, that wooden foundations were common among all levels of Chesapeake society and for all forms of construction throughout the seventeenth century.

Architectural historians who tackled this newly identified phenomenon dismissed as both inadequate and elitist explanations based on the issue of aesthetic sophistication. Instead, they set about identifying the social and economic forces that made colonists content to build--and continuously to rebuild--such apparently flimsy structures (fig. 7). Writing first in a provocative essay entitled "Doing History with Material Culture" and subsequently at more length in collaboration with four co-authors, Cary Carson explained the "impermanent" buildings of colonial Virginia and Maryland as the architectural manifestations of a society rendered chronically unstable by appalling death rates and of an economy kept perpetually volatile by dramatic and sometimes annual shifts in the European market for tobacco. In such an environment, Carson and his colleagues argued, no planter felt sufficiently confident of the future to spend money and labor on an expensive "English-framed" house with secure masonry underpinnings.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> The earliest published description of post-in-the-ground construction is William T. Buchanan, Jr., and Edward F. Heite, "The Hallows Site: A Seventeenth-Century Yeoman's Cottage in Virginia," Historical Archaeology 5 (1971) pp. 38-48.

<sup>72</sup> Cary Carson, "Doing History with Material Culture," Material Culture and the Study of American Life, Ian M. G. Quimby, editor, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), pp. 41-64 and Cary Carson, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, and Dell Upton, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," Winterthur Portfolio 16 (Summer/Autumn 1981) pp. 135-196, reprinted in St. George, editor, Material Culture in America, pp. 113-159. Carson's "Doing History" essay is especially provocative

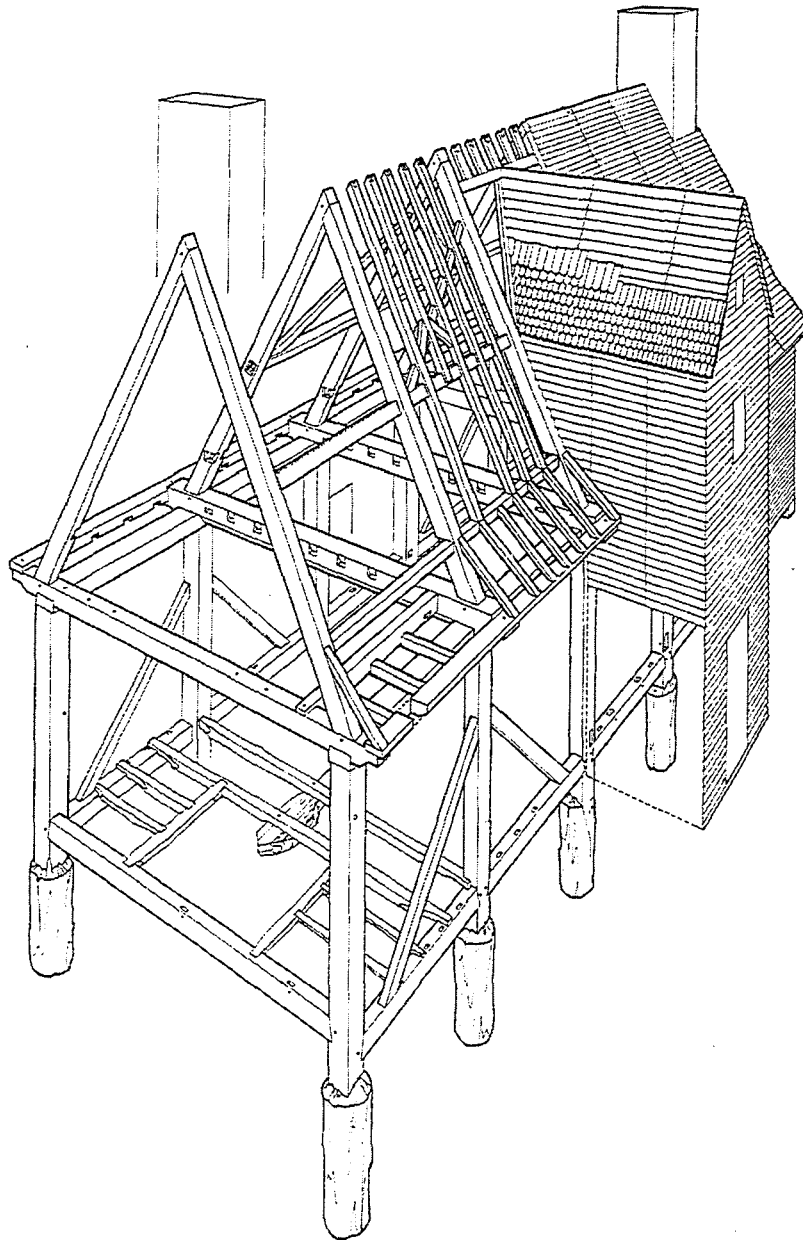


Fig. 7. Cedar Park, Anne Arundel County, Maryland, Perspective Drawing by Cary Carson. From Cary Carson, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, and Dell Upton, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," Winterthur Portfolio 16 (Summer/Autumn 1981), p. 145.

When Carson's second article "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies" appeared in 1981, there was freshly in print an essay that challenged components of Carson's argument and at the same time deepened the discussion of colonial Virginia buildings as sensitive responses to social and economic conditions. In his analysis of the seventeenth-century Clifts plantation in Westmoreland County, Fraser Neiman objected to the presentist quality of the term "impermanent," pointing out that the twenty-year life expectancy for the average colonial earthfast house might not be far exceeded by many modern structures. Neiman also rejected Carson's characterization of post-in-the-ground construction as an architecture of crisis. He argued instead that this relatively quick and inexpensive form of construction made sense for an economy in which the wise allocation of capital and labor was crucial to survival. Thus earthfast construction was but one response to the colonial planters's need to devote tools and hands to the labor-intensive cultivation of tobacco. Gradual changes in the form of Virginia houses such as the dwelling at the Clifts--the blocking of open through passages and the relegation of service functions to detached outbuildings chief among them--was yet because he argued that in order to be taken seriously, scholars like architectural historians who begin their analysis with artifacts must shape their studies to answer the questions posed by historians. Among the flurry of reactions to this assertion was Robert Blair St. George's. Because buildings and other artifacts represent a different sort of evidence about the past, St. George wrote, scholars of material culture cannot necessarily address the same questions that absorb historians. They can, however, change the questions historians ask as well as the nature of scholarly inquiry into the colonial past. Robert Blair St. George, "Style and Structure in the Joinery of Dedham and Medfield, Massachusetts, 1635-1685," American Furniture and Its Makers, Ian M. G. Quimby, editor, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 1-46.

another response to this same imperative (fig. 8).<sup>73</sup>

In his essay "The Origins of Chesapeake Architecture," Dell Upton furthered the task of integrating the issue of earthfast construction into more general discussions of colonial Virginia's houses as material aspects of colonial Virginia's society and economy. Upton described how immigrants to the Chesapeake colonies first transplanted and then rethought the three-room, hall-chamber-kitchen configuration of the traditional English seventeenth-century house.<sup>74</sup> During the decades when it became clear that the acquisition of labor in the form of indentured servants was crucial to the success of the Chesapeake plantation, these houses grew bigger through the addition of numerous servants's sleeping rooms. By the third quarter of the seventeenth century, when the swelling population of discontented servants had come to represent a threat to Virginia's social stability, planters who had been living in capacious houses began to build smaller ones. They subtracted first the servants's lodging rooms and then the kitchen and adjacent service rooms from their own dwellings, relegating them instead to detached outbuildings. By the time African slaves had supplanted indentured servants in the colonial Virginia labor force, planters usually lived in dwellings with only one or two

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<sup>73</sup> Fraser D. Neiman, "Domestic Architecture at the Clifts Plantation: The Social Context of Early Virginia Building," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 28 (December 1978) pp. 3096-3128, reprinted in Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, editors, Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), pp. 292-314.

<sup>74</sup> Authoritative discussions of the origin and evolution of the post-medieval three-room English dwelling appear in M. W. Barley, The English Farmhouse and Cottage (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961) and Eric Mercer, English Vernacular Houses: A Study of Traditional Farmhouses and Cottages (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1975).

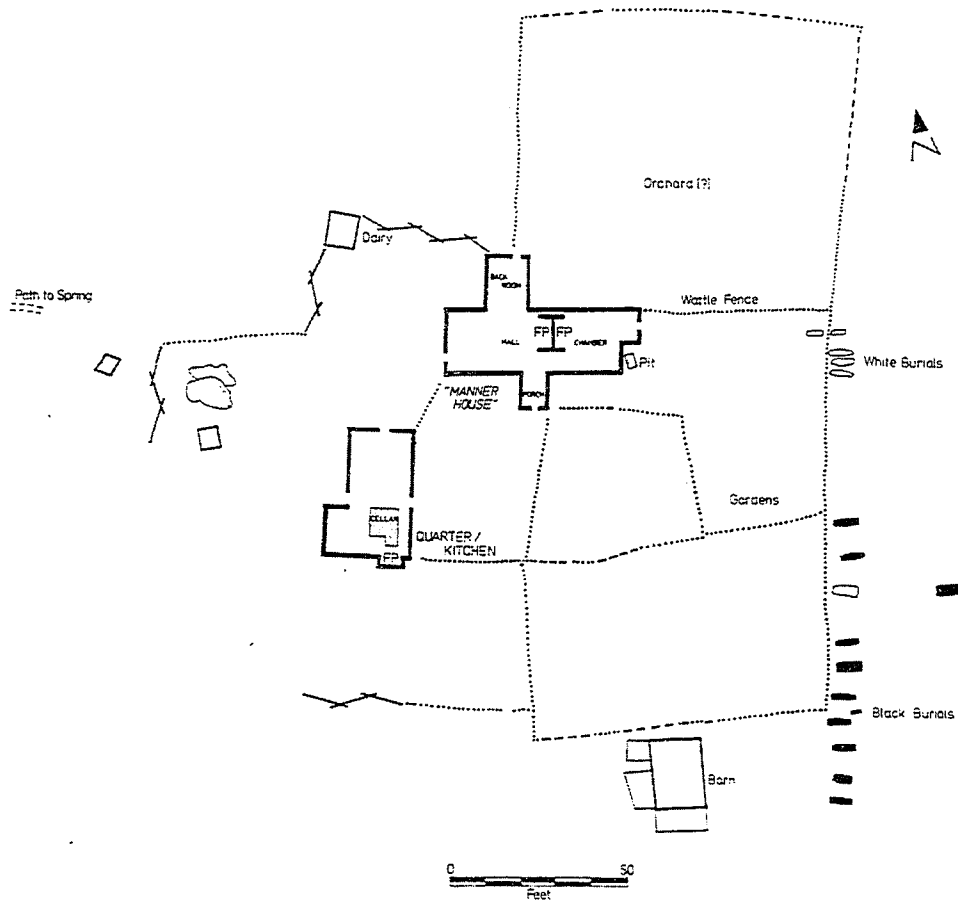


Fig. 8. Site Plan of the Cliffs, Westmoreland County, Virginia, about 1710. From Fraser Neiman, "Domestic Architecture at the Cliffs Plantation," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 28 (December 1978), p. 3108.

principal rooms, but their plantation sites were dotted with numerous separate outbuildings in which were segregated most forms of domestic and agricultural work as well as the domestic and agricultural workers themselves.<sup>75</sup>

Many aspects of architecture and life in Virginia's enigmatic seventeenth century remain unexplored. Now that the connections between earthfast architecture and seventeenth-century Virginia's society and economy seem clear, one obvious line of inquiry concerns the wealth and social logic behind the construction of a few substantial masonry houses like Bacon's Castle in Surry County and Arlington in Accomac County.<sup>76</sup> But for scholars eager to incorporate the evidence from surviving buildings into their studies, a shift of focus to the architectural traditions of the eighteenth century was fundamental, for it was not until after 1700 that most standing colonial houses were constructed.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Dell Upton, "The Origins of Chesapeake Architecture," Three Centuries of Maryland Architecture (Annapolis: Maryland Historical Trust, 1982), pp. 44-57. One of the most compelling aspects of Upton's study is his linking of changes in the form of Virginia houses, which he traces through an analysis of room-by-room inventories, to historians's discussions of key trends and events in the evolution of the Chesapeake labor force. See Wesley Frank Craven, White, Red, and Black: The Seventeenth-Century Virginian (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1971); Edmund S. Morgan, "Headrights and Head Counts: A Review Essay," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 80 (July 1972) pp. 361-371; T. H. Breen, "A Changing Labor Force and Race Relations in Virginia 1660-1710," Journal of Social History 7 (Fall 1973) pp. 3-25.

<sup>76</sup> Brief descriptions of recent findings at both Bacon's Castle and Arlington appear in William M. Kelso, "Big Things Remembered: Anglo-Virginian Houses, Armorial Devices, and the Impact of Common Sense," The Art and Mystery of Historical Archaeology: Essays in Honor of James Deetz, Anne Elizabeth Yentsch and Mary C. Beaudry, editors, (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 1992), pp. 127-145.

<sup>77</sup> Dendrochronological analysis of key Virginia buildings has



It appears at first incongruent--but is nonetheless true--that the basis for a fresh explanation of colonial Virginia's eighteenth-century domestic architecture originated with the field analysis of the late colonial and early national houses of German immigrants to the Valley of Virginia. In "Acculturation in the Shenandoah Valley," Edward A. Chappell argued that German newcomers to western Virginia confronted such daunting discrimination from their English neighbors that they gradually abandoned most of the overtly German aspects of their culture. These included the traditional dwelling plan with its single interior chimney and its distinctive arrangement of three rooms: the kitchen, chamber, and stove room or sitting room.<sup>78</sup> Before the German settlers entirely abandoned this house form, however, there was a key and instructive intermediate phase in their acculturation during which they constructed houses with English-looking elevations but with the traditional German arrangement of rooms. Chappell's essential point concerning the relationship between social or economic forces and architectural change has made "Acculturation in the Shenandoah Valley" one of the most influential discussions of German

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revealed that only Bacon's Castle was built before 1700. Thus architectural fieldwork in Virginia necessarily concerns the building traditions of the eighteenth century. For the dendrochronological method with proven applicability in the Chesapeake, see Mark R. Edwards, "Dating Historic Buildings in Lower Southern Maryland with Dendrochronology," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture I, Camille Wells, editor (Annapolis: Vernacular Architecture Forum, 1982), pp. 153-158.

<sup>78</sup> The German designations for these rooms are Kuche, Kammer, and Stube. Scholars sometimes refer to Germanic dwellings with this basic configuration of rooms a Flurkuchenhaus. Edward A. Chappell, "Acculturation in the Shenandoah Valley: Rhenish Houses of the Massanutten Settlement," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 124 (February 1980) pp. 55-89, reprinted in Upton and Vlach, editors, Common Places, pp. 27-57.

architecture in early America. Perhaps more enduring is his subtle point that the process of design might involve one set of decisions concerning the exterior presentation of a house and an entirely separate set of choices concerning its interior organization of space. The recent reinterpretation of eighteenth-century houses in Tidewater Virginia have taken this insight as a point of departure.

Dell Upton initiated this scholarly revision in his 1982 essay "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia." Using fieldwork among standing houses with an analysis of room-by-room probate inventories, Upton described and explained a gradual change in the planning of houses during Virginia's second colonial century. While one- and two-room buildings remained the most common form of housing, wealthy Virginians began to modify their dwellings by inserting a passage between the two principal rooms. This change, Upton argued, reflects a growing impulse to separate living from circulation space and to create an architectural baffle or zone of transition that could protect inhabitants and their domestic doings from the casual and unexpected arrival of outsiders. This same impulse to differentiate private from public space also accounts for the addition of a third room to the commonplace hall-chamber plan. Increasingly over the course of the eighteenth century, planters built their houses with a dining room, "a semi-public space that mediated between outside and inside." This third room also removed the commotion of dining activities from the hall, which Upton called "the center of the family's social landscape."<sup>79</sup>

Upton used his fieldwork and his documentary research to explain the shape of eighteenth-century Virginia houses in terms of

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<sup>79</sup> Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Winterthur Portfolio 17 (Summer/Autumn 1982) pp. 95-119, reprinted in Upton and Vlach, editors, Common Places, pp. 315-335.

social priorities and domestic customs. He created a "social molecule," a diagram of the relationships characteristic among the principal spaces within the Virginia house, in order to demonstrate how dwellings with very different plans could actually function, as living space, in quite similar ways (fig. 9). Upton further observed that the European detached house form often found favor in eighteenth-century Virginia because its central passage and double file of rooms represented a convenient envelope in which planters could arrange their four customary living spaces--the hall, chamber, dining room, and passage. To the fourth room enclosed within this academic European house form, Virginians often assigned no name or explicit function.<sup>80</sup> Thus, Upton concluded, Virginia house-builders scrutinized and mentally dissected the forms and details of the Georgian-plan house, selectively adopting or eliminating components according to their own architectural needs.

In making this point, Upton argued for a new way of comprehending the process by which colonial Virginians designed their houses. Even when their goal was an elaborate and stylish house, Virginians did more than slavishly copy--and sometimes oafishly misinterpret--European precedents. Instead, they thought through and evaluated their architectural options, making decisions more on the basis of social, economic, or domestic concerns than on aesthetic impulses. Always, Upton insisted, local customs and priorities outweighed international design trends: each house, however elaborate, was shaped to play a role in the Tidewater countryside where it stood.

#### Key to Upton's discussion of eighteenth-century Virginia houses

<sup>80</sup> The European detached house is discussed in John Summerson, Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830 (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969) and in William H. Pierson, American Buildings and their Architects: The Colonial and Neoclassical Styles (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970).

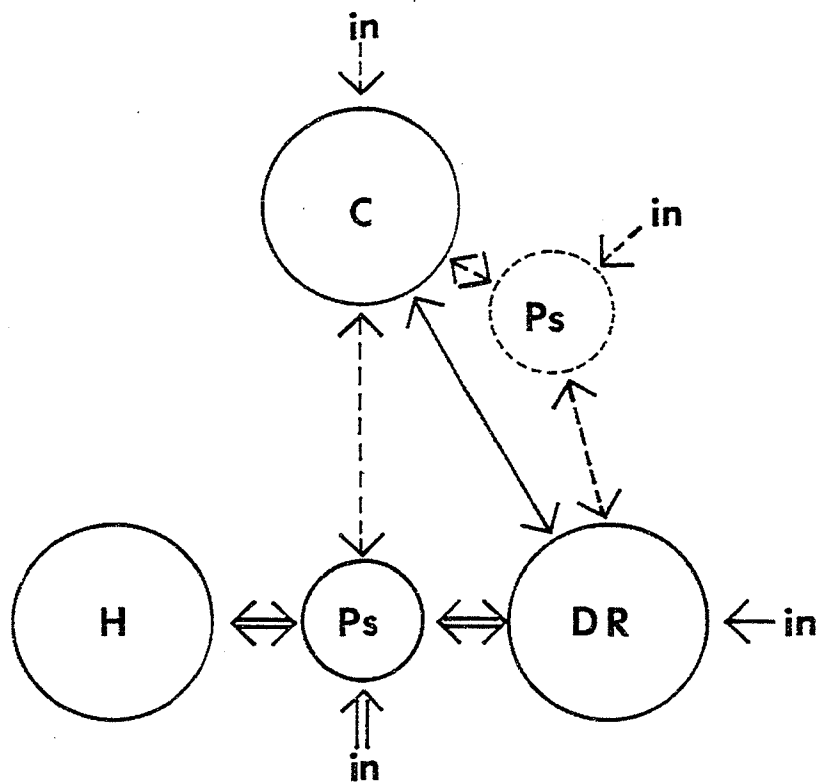


Fig. 9. Social Molecule of the Eighteenth-Century Virginia House.  
 From Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Winterthur Portfolio 17 (Summer/Autumn 1982), p. 107.

is the matter of room names, room functions, and the interlocking roles they played in the colonial planter's household. During the early 1980s, Edward Chappell also contributed to the study of space within the eighteenth-century Virginia house with a pair of short but fundamental articles. In "Williamsburg Architecture as Social Space" and "Looking at Buildings," Chappell described and demonstrated a method for understanding and socially "ranking" the spaces within colonial Virginia houses through close observation of their size, their position, and--most of all--the quality of their finish.<sup>81</sup> These "building hierarchies," Chappell argued, "reflect peoples's differing abilities and desires to expend capital on architectural space and its elaboration."<sup>82</sup> Variation in the size and quality of finish between two houses might reflect differences in their inhabitants's wealth.<sup>83</sup> Variation in the level of finish between two rooms in the same house certainly reflect differences in their social importance.

Upton and Chappell's essays have been fundamental to the compelling new analysis of early Virginia housing, but by explaining rooms as architectural components that can be ranked and diagrammed rather than as spaces that were shaped for habitation, both have encouraged a comprehension of colonial Virginia's domestic architecture that may be excessively mechanical--even ahistorical. Mark R. Wenger has incorporated Upton's sources, Chappell's methods, and the insights of both into his own perceptive reading of documentary and architectural sources. The result is a fuller discussion of the way Virginians shaped the space within their houses and used it for living. Through his particular

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<sup>81</sup> Edward Chappell, "Williamsburg Architecture as Social Space," Fresh Advices (November 1981) pp. i-iv; Edward Chappell, "Looking at Buildings," Fresh Advices (November 1984) pp. i-vi.

<sup>82</sup> Chappell, "Looking at Buildings," p. ii.

<sup>83</sup> For more on this subject, see Chapter 4.

sensitivity to the details of evidence, Wenger has also achieved a refined comprehension of how Virginia house form and room use evolved over the course of the eighteenth century. In his 1986 essay "The Central Passage in Virginia," Wenger drew on colonial references to the furnishings of and activities in passages to trace changes in this component of the early Virginia house.

Acknowledging that the passage was first introduced to channel movement through a dwelling and to buffer access to each of its rooms, Wenger argued that it gradually evolved, on account of the doors positioned at each end, into a light and cool summer living area. After 1750 gentry planters began to widen, bisect, and embellish their central passages to create elegant, well appointed "halls" or "saloons" in which to receive and entertain guests.<sup>84</sup>

Challenging the conventional explanations of three- and five-part country houses as unmistakable statements of aesthetic allegiance to the principles of Andrea Palladio, Wenger observed that Virginia houses with advanced, raised, or pedimented central bays gained popularity in Virginia only after the central passage had achieved status as an important social space.<sup>85</sup>

In 1989 Wenger published a second essay concerning the use and evolution of space within the eighteenth-century Virginia house.

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<sup>84</sup> Mark R. Wenger, "The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Space," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture II, Wells, editor, pp. 137-149.

<sup>85</sup> Wenger, "Central Passage," p. 144. The conventional explanation for such Virginia houses as derived from Palladian principles and precedents is restated in two essays that are roughly contemporary with Wenger's analysis. See Calder Loth, "Palladio in Southside Virginia: Brandon and Battersea," Building by the Book I, Mario di Valmarana, editor, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984), pp. 25-46 and William M. S. Rasmussen, "Palladio in Tidewater Virginia: Mount Airy and Blandfield," Building by the Book I, di Valmarana, editor, pp. 75-109.

"The Dining Room in Early Virginia" traced the emergence of a room that served first to subtract from the hall, the planters's principal living space, the commotion and traffic associated with meals. As the accoutrements of gentility became first accessible to and then plentiful within the households of well-to-do Virginians, dining gradually became a social opportunity to display and, in a ceremonial way, bestow upon guests expensive possessions made of glass, silver, mahogany, and porcelain. Increasingly, Wenger discovered, dining rooms were designed and finished to accommodate this important new social function. Among houses built after 1750, dining rooms were often the largest of any within a Virginia house. Many dining rooms were finished with paneling, wallpaper, or other embellishments that was more costly and elaborate than those in adjacent rooms. Often glazed closets or "beaufaits" were installed in dining rooms so that the equipage of eating and drinking could simultaneously be stored and kept on view.<sup>86</sup> The taking of meals became so fundamental a social activity that in some fashionable houses built after 1750, the dining room actually supplanted halls and parlors altogether. This is the case at Menokin in Richmond County, where a large dining room shared the main floor with two chambers--private sitting and sleeping rooms--and a study.<sup>87</sup>

While Wenger worked to recover and elucidate the complex and changing roles of key spaces within the eighteenth-century Virginia dwelling, Dell Upton refocused attention on the issues of power and

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<sup>86</sup> Mark R. Wenger, "The Dining Room in Early Virginia," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture III, Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, editors, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), pp. 149-159.

<sup>87</sup> Wenger, "Dining Room," p. 157. Menokin is pictured in Chapter 4. A general discussion of eighteenth-century room names and functions that owes much to Wenger's insights is Jan Kirsten Gilliam and Betty Crowe Leviner, Furnishing Williamsburg's Historic Buildings (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1991).

social dominance that lay behind the configuring and embellishing of the Virginia houses themselves. He achieved this by pressing his analysis beyond the walls of the house itself and into the surrounding landscape. In his 1985 essay "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Upton explained how Virginia planters shaped, ranked, and controlled spaces not only in their houses but throughout the countryside as well. By placing their houses on prominent sites and surrounding them with numerous service buildings, wealthy planters created architectural metaphors for the social and political roles they expected to play. Arranging roads and gates to enhance the drama of approach and admission similarly reinforced their position as dominant figures in local and regional society. In this "landscape of power," the quarters--the domestic architecture--of slaves contributed to the visual authority of each planter's house in that they were smaller, cruder, and unobtrusively positioned. Thus with "White and Black Landscapes" Upton identified the eighteenth-century culmination of a relationship between housing and bound labor that began a hundred years before.<sup>88</sup>

Upton's argument about the early Virginia landscape is one component of his larger analysis of architecture and society in eighteenth-century Virginia. In Holy Things and Profane, Upton

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<sup>88</sup> Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Places: A Quarterly Journal of Environmental Design 2 (Winter 1985) pp. 59-72, reprinted in St. George, editor, Material Life in America, pp. 357-369. A more recent version of Upton's argument in which he has contrasted the "articulated" landscape of the wealthy with the "static" landscape of the poor is Dell Upton, "Imagining the Early Virginia Landscape," Earth Patterns: Essays in Landscape Archaeology, William M. Kelso and Rachel Most, editors, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), pp. 71-86.



identified Anglican parish churches rather than dwellings as the key architectural component of the Virginia planters's world. But he emphasized that the symbolic importance of these churches devolved in part from such architectural components as complex paneled surfaces and pedimented doorways that most Virginians associated initially with the houses of their elite neighbors. The result, Upton argued, was a visual connection between the House of God and the houses of the gentry that was bold in its manifestation but ambiguous in its implications.<sup>89</sup>

In the process of situating eighteenth-century Virginia housing amidst a larger physical context, Upton also helped to recover aspects of the architectural experience of eighteenth-century Virginia slaves. Unlike most recent descriptions and analyses of the housing of enslaved African Americans, Upton did not attempt to identify specific dwelling forms or arrangements of space as distinctly African-American.<sup>90</sup> He also refrained from drawing

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<sup>89</sup> Dell Upton, Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia (New York and Cambridge: Architectural History Foundation and MIT Press, 1986). Upton's insight about the vague and unstated but powerful connections between the architectural forms of early Virginia churches and early Virginia houses is influenced by Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," Culture and Its Creators: Essays in Honor of Edward Shils, Joseph Ben-David and Terry Nichols Clark, editors, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp. 150-171. An abbreviated version of Upton's argument about the relationship between Virginia parish churches and the social and political power of the gentry appears in Dell Upton, "Anglican Parish Churches in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture II, Wells, editor, pp. 90-101.

<sup>90</sup> The most well known attempt to identify an African-American influence in American architecture is John Michael Vlach, "The Shotgun House: An African Architectural Legacy," Pioneer America: Journal of Historic American Material Culture 8 (January-

inferences about the domestic conditions of colonial slaves on the basis of African-American dwelling built during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>91</sup> Acknowledging that the social condition of slaves afforded them scant opportunities to set their own standards for housing, Upton relied on planters's and travelers's encounters with black Virginians to discern how slaves used and informally augmented their assigned dwelling places to create their own webs of paths and destinations. This, Upton argued, is the long-vanished black landscape of colonial Virginia, an appropriated and largely covert countryside that was as real and significant as the more visible world that white Virginians constructed.<sup>92</sup>

It is to this end, or--more properly--to this station in a continuing analysis, that the scholarship of domestic architecture in colonial Virginia has now evolved. Beginning in the early decades of the twentieth century with a concern for the European architectural prototypes of Virginia imitations and continuing through a rigorous but ultimately sterile attempt to differentiate and explain properly Virginia's academic and vernacular traditions, the study of Virginia's domestic architecture had emerged as a richly interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary enterprise. Drawing important techniques, provocative questions and theories from historical archaeology and social history, the new scholars of early Virginia housing have grounded their studies in the conviction that architectural, archaeological, and documentary evidence are all

July 1976) pp. 47-70 reprinted in Upton and Vlach, editors, Common Places, pp. 58-78.

<sup>91</sup> Drawing largely on illustrations of antebellum slave houses, Mechal Sobel boldly but unconvincingly argued for the common African and European antecedents of the small-scaled one-room houses that most early Virginians knew. Sobel, The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 100-126.

<sup>92</sup> Upton, "White and Black Landscapes," Places, pp. 66-70.

crucial to their task. Thorough research also involves, where possible, the quantitative as well as anecdotal use of these materials.

The best new architectural history, moreover, does not acknowledge limits to the subjects worth addressing. Small, plain, or crudely finished buildings once classified as "vernacular" are as complex and challenging to the scholar's eye as buildings with those characteristics often deemed "academic." Architectural studies may center on a single building or on a group of formally, functionally, or historically related structures. The new architectural history includes investigations of the shape, finish, purpose, or furnishings of individual rooms, and may also turn outward to analyze assemblages of buildings and the spaces that are created by their juxtaposition. Even the delineations and enclosures of an entire landscape represent a form of historic architecture. Finally and most crucially, the new architectural history is shaped by the conviction that buildings manifest--sometimes by what they include, other times by what they leave out--the processes of thinking and behaving common or exceptional among those who made and used them.<sup>93</sup> So it is that the new architectural history is, in the most basic and most expansive sense, one of the humanities. Thus, to investigate architecture in all its forms is to study a people and their way of life. Thus, to study the houses of early Virginia is to study early Virginia in an essential and comprehensive

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<sup>93</sup> Dell Upton has advocated a shift in scholarly emphasis from stasis to process, from the comprehension of early Virginia houses as intact and culminating statements of intention to the perception of them as contributions to a sustained dialogue. Upton, "New Directions in the Study of Virginia's Material Culture," paper presented at the Virginia Historical Society conference New Directions in Virginia History in Richmond, Virginia, 12 October 1990.

way. This is true because architecture encompasses all the material devices and manifestations of a people negotiating their path through space and time.

## CATALOG OF HOUSES IN WESTMORELAND COUNTY

BLenheim  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
COLONIAL BEACH SOUTH 7.5

Blenheim faces west on a level site located near but well inland of Bridges Creek, a tributary of the Potomac River. The land between the northwest and southeast branches of this creek appears to have been part of a tract patented by Richard Hill in 1661. By the end of the seventeenth century, it belonged to the descendants of John Washington, who acquired his first parcel of land along Bridges Creek in 1664.<sup>1</sup> Blenheim was built during the Revolutionary War, and it is a Washington family tradition that the house was sited so far from navigable waters in order to keep it safe from battle or plunder.<sup>2</sup>

The house is a two-story, three-bay structure made of brick laid up in a Flemish-bond pattern both above and below an unmolded water table.<sup>3</sup> The door and window openings on the first story of the house have segmental arches. Those on the second story are surmounted by jackarches. Originally, Blenheim had a hipped roof, but sometime after 1823, the north and south planes of this structure were built out to create a gable-roof design.<sup>4</sup> Toward

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<sup>1</sup> Both Richard Hill and Tobias Butler patented land in this area between the branches of Bridges Creek, and it is unclear precisely which parcel included the site of Blenheim. David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia, (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), p. 63. If Richard Hill's holding covered the site in question, then it had come into the hands of John Washington's son Lawrence Washington by 1698, when the younger man's will mentions "the land that was Richard Hills." Lawrence Washington Will, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 2, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Lawrence Washington Latane, Jr., 24 May 1989.

<sup>3</sup> A photograph of Blenheim appears in Chapter 4.

the middle of the nineteenth century, a two-story wood-framed wing was built onto the south end of the house. A wing of similar proportions was added to the north end of the house in 1989.

Blenheim has a central-passage two-room plan. Original eighteenth-century woodwork survives on the stair and around the interior doorways in both the first- and second-story passages. Two eighteenth-century six-panel doors also remain in use on the second story. Other interior details, such as the mantels and several interior doors, date from two or three nineteenth-century remodelings.<sup>5</sup> Most of the remaining interior finish was added during a major renovation that began in the 1970s, when Blenheim was rescued from an advanced state of deterioration by the current owners, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence W. Latane, Jr.

John Washington divided his landholdings among his children John, Lawrence, and Ann in his will of 1677.<sup>6</sup> By the first quarter

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<sup>4</sup> The house is depicted with its original hipped roof on a 1823 plat of Sarah Washington's property and in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence W. Latane, Jr. Before Blenheim was renovated, the built-out sections of roof were clearly visible, and their fabric suggested a middle or late nineteenth-century date. Notes and photographs on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>5</sup> Federal-style doors dating from the first half of the nineteenth century are scattered around the house. Door frames with Federal profiles indicate approximately when two closets were added to the south room on the second story. Mid-century Greek Revival mantels embellish the original fireplaces on the second story. Gothic Revival mantels in both of the original first-story rooms may be contemporary with the Greek Revival additions, but they may also date from the 1870s.

<sup>6</sup> John Washington gave his dwelling plantation on Bridge Creek to his younger son John by will dated 1677. This document is quoted in Charles E. Hatch, Jr., Popes Creek Plantation, Birthplace of George Washington, (Washington's Birthplace: Wakefield National

of the eighteenth century, Lawrence Washington's son Augustine had inherited a quantity of the family property around Bridges Creek and was busily augmenting it.<sup>7</sup> In 1718, Augustine Washington acquired 150 acres of adjacent land overlooking Popes Creek.<sup>8</sup> The house he had begun to construct by 1722 became not only the new focus of his Westmoreland County property but also, in 1732, the birthplace of his youngest son George Washington.<sup>9</sup>

Augustine Washington was living on a plantation in Prince William County when he died in 1743 and bequeathed most of his Westmoreland County lands to his son Augustine Washington, Jr.<sup>10</sup> The younger Augustine Washington, in turn, willed this property to his son William Augustine Washington in 1762.<sup>11</sup> According to a Memorial Association, 1979), pp. 5-6. Nevertheless, Lawrence Washington owned at least part of this land by 1698. Lawrence Washington Will, p. 133.

<sup>7</sup> Lawrence Washington bequeathed land in the vicinity of Bridges Creek to his son Augustine Washington by will dated 1698. Lawrence Washington Will, p. 133. A map of Augustine Washington's property between Bridges Creek and Popes Creek appears in Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, pp. 170-171.

<sup>8</sup> Lawrence Abbington to Augustine Washington, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 9, p. 279. This is judged by historians of George Washington's birthplace to be the parcel on which Augustine Washington built his new dwelling. Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, pp. 32-33.

<sup>9</sup> In 1726, Augustine Washington sued the estate of David Jones, a Westmoreland County carpenter and joiner, for "not finishing my house." Documents associated with the case are quoted in Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, pp. 33-34.

<sup>10</sup> Will of Augustine Washington, quoted in Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, pp. 41 and 45. Washington's Little Hunting Creek plantation in Prince William County later became Mount Vernon. Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, p. 41.

<sup>11</sup> Will of Augustine Washington, Jr., 25 May 1762, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 14, p. 126.



longstanding tradition, William A. Washington and his family were living in his grandfather's house on Popes Creek when it caught fire and burned on Christmas day in 1779.<sup>12</sup> Washington subsequently built Blenheim to shelter his family and their salvaged household. The new dwelling was standing by September of 1780, when Washington complained before the county court that the course of a road "toward Mattox Bridge" was injurious to him, "going immediately thro' his yard, and within thirty feet of his dwelling house."<sup>13</sup>

Documentary evidence supports the family story that William A. Washington thought of Blenheim as only a temporary abode. His family was still living there in 1787, when young Lucinda Lee of Chantilly came to call.<sup>14</sup> But by 1795, when Washington sent an admonishing letter to his sons Augustine and Bushrod, the family was at "Haywood," a big, newly built house sited near the north edge of their property on the Potomac River.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, pp. 61-62. The site is indeed called "the burnt house plantation" in Will of William Augustine Washington, 12 July 1810, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 22, pp. 165-169.

<sup>13</sup> Documents associated with this complaint are quoted in Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, p. 79.

<sup>14</sup> Lucinda Lee, Diary of a Young Lady of Virginia. 1782 (Baltimore: John Murphy, 1871), pp. 46-48, 52. The publisher erroneously dated this document five years too early. Later editions of the diary bear the proper date of 1787. See the entry for Chantilly elsewhere in this catalog.

<sup>15</sup> Augustine and Bushrod Washington were in school at the time in Georgetown. Washington to Washington, 2 February 1795, letter in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence W. Latane, Jr. Haywood is described in an insurance policy as a "wooden dwelling two stories high 60 by 32 feet" with two one-story wings measuring twelve by twenty-eight feet. Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia Policy No. 1141, 14 December 1805, Virginia State Library and

In 1802 or 1803, William A. Washington determined to sell his Westmoreland County holdings, which he advertised as six thousand acres "at present cultivated as four farms," including Haywood and Blenheim.<sup>16</sup> When suitable offers did not materialize, Washington leased his property and moved to the vicinity of Washington city, where he was living by 1805.<sup>17</sup> At his death in 1810, Washington gave his wife Sarah Tayloe Washington a life interest in both Haywood and Blenheim.<sup>18</sup> She moved back to Haywood and spent the next decade managing 2500 acres of her husband's estate.<sup>19</sup>

When Sarah Tayloe Washington died in 1820, Haywood and Blenheim descended to her daughter and namesake. The younger Sarah Tayloe Washington had married her cousin Lawrence Washington, and it is said that the couple was living at Blenheim when she inherited the Westmoreland County land from her mother.<sup>20</sup> By November of 1820, Lawrence Washington identified Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>16</sup> Washington advertisement, Washington Federalist 17 March 1803, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> In the insurance policy of 1805, Washington is identified as living at "Rock Hill in Washington, the state of Maryland." Haywood had been rented to Churchill Blackburn. Mutual Assurance Policy No.1141.

<sup>18</sup> William A. Washington wrote "I lend to my wife Sarah during her life all my lands lying between the land above herein devised to my sons Bushrod and George Corbin which includes Haywood and Blenheim plantations." William A. Washington Will, p.167.

<sup>19</sup> Between 1813 and 1819, Sarah Washington paid taxes on 2475 acres of land in Westmoreland County. Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia. In 1816, she renewed the insurance policy on the house at Haywood, identifying herself as in residence and "tenant for life." Mutual Assurance Policy No. 1141, 20 May 1816. Haywood eventually fell into ruins and the site washed into the Potomac River. Latane Interview, 24 May 1989.

<sup>20</sup> Lawrence Washington Latane, Jr., "Blenheim," Northern Neck

their residence as "now at Haywood" in an newspaper announcement that Blenheim was for sale. Washington described the plantation as amounting to thirteen or fourteen hundred acres with "a brick house (a little out of repair) sufficiently commodious for the accommodation of a small family, with an excellent meat house and dairy, and a well of fine water within 30 yards of the house."<sup>21</sup>

The Washingtons did not sell Blenheim: Lawrence Washington paid taxes on the property through the 1850s, and the house appears to have continued serving the family as a secondary dwelling site.<sup>22</sup> In about 1857 Sarah Tayloe Washington wrote her husband that their son Richard Bushrod Washington was probably "weatherbound at Blenheim."<sup>23</sup> Following the Civil War, their younger son Lawrence Washington and his wife Julia Carpenter made Blenheim their home. In the early twentieth century, Blenheim was at last sold out of the family. It was recovered by Washington descendants during the 1950s, when the L. W. Latanes acquired the site.<sup>24</sup>

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of Virginia Historical Magazine 25 (December 1975), p. 2706.

<sup>21</sup> Washington advertisement, Virginia Herald, 4 November 1820, p. 3, c. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records 1820-1858, Virginia State Library and Archives.

<sup>23</sup> Washington to Washington, undated letter in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence W. Latane, Jr. The approximate date of 1857 is determined by Sarah Washington's reference to a baby girl. The child was Sarah Augustine Washington, who was born in 1856. Bruton Parish Churchyard and Church (Williamsburg: Bruton Parish Church, 1976), p. 61.

<sup>24</sup> Latane, "Blenheim," p. 2707; Latane Interview, 24 May 1989.

CHANTILLY  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
STRATFORD HALL 7.5

The land on which Chantilly was built during the third quarter of the eighteenth century was patented by John Hallowses in 1650. This tract of 2400 acres passed through the hands of several Hallowses descendants until 1733, when Samuel Hallowses, a distant English cousin, sold the property to Thomas Lee.<sup>1</sup> The Hallowses property was the second of Lee's major acquisitions of land on the steep banks of the Potomac River. About a mile west of this property lay a parcel of over a thousand acres called "the Clifts" that Lee had bought in 1711. In the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the Clifts became Stratford, Lee's new dwelling plantation.<sup>2</sup>

During the lifetime of Thomas Lee, the site of Chantilly remained an outlying component of his vast estate. When Lee died in 1750, he gave to his eldest son Philip Ludwell Lee "all my lands in the countys of Westmoreland and Northumberland."<sup>3</sup> Thirteen

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<sup>1</sup> David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), p. 67. The descent of the Hallowses patent, as well as the archaeological remains of seventeenth-century habitation on the property is described in William T. Buchanan, Jr. and Edward F. Heite, "The Hallowses Site: A Seventeenth-Century Yeoman's Cottage in Virginia," Historical Archaeology 5 (1971), pp. 38-48.

<sup>2</sup> Nathaniel Pope patented this tract in 1651. Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p. 65. For £375, Pope's grandson sold to Thomas Lee 1043 acres of the "plantacon commonly called the Clifts." Nathaniel Pope to Thomas Lee, 14 February 1716, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 6, pp. 333-336. Fraser D. Neiman, The "Manner House" Before Stratford: Discovering the Clifts Plantation (Stratford, Virginia: Robert E. Lee Memorial Association, 1980), p. 4. See the entry for Stratford elsewhere in this catalog.

years later, Philip Ludwell Lee leased to his younger brother Richard Henry Lee a tract of five hundred acres "between Major Thomas Chilton and the Halwes Marsh Plantation of Philip Ludwell Lee."<sup>4</sup> The brothers agreed that the lease for this land would last during the lives of Richard Henry Lee, his wife Ann, and their son Ludwell. In return, Richard Henry Lee was annually to give his brother 2650 pounds of tobacco in ceremonial rent.<sup>5</sup> Shortly after this agreement became a matter of record, Richard Henry Lee settled his family on the plantation in a newly erected house called "Chantilly."

The house was built near the eastern end of a ridge that overlooks Currioman Bay and the Potomac River. On three sides of the dwelling site, the terrain falls sharply away into ravines where flow the Clifton and Chantilly branches of Cold Harbor Creek. In 1787, Richard Henry Lee's daughter Lucinda mentioned visiting "our little garden" which she and her sister had planted on one of the slopes below the house. She wrote: "we were so unfortunate as to make it on the side of the hill, and it was wash't very much."<sup>6</sup> While visiting his Virginia cousins in 1790, Thomas Lee Shippen observed that Chantilly "commands a much finer view than Stratford . . . [with] a charming little creek whose windings spread across and water the space which lies between Chantilly and the river." Across Cold Water Creek and Currioman Bay, "a fine island called

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<sup>3</sup> Will of Thomas Lee, 30 July 1751, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 11, p. 311.

<sup>4</sup> Chantilly was, as this description suggests, situated just west of Thomas Chilton's Currioman and about three miles east of Stratford. See the entry for Currioman elsewhere in this catalog.

<sup>5</sup> Lee to Lee, 6 January 1763, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 14, pp. 187-191.

<sup>6</sup> Lucinda Lee, Diary of a Young Lady of Virginia, 1782 (Baltimore: John Murphy and Company, 1871) p. 29. The publisher erroneously dated this diary five years too early. Later editions bear the proper date of 1787.

Blackstone's adds a finish to the landscape."<sup>7</sup>

Chantilly remained the dwelling of Richard Henry Lee's family until after his death in 1794.<sup>8</sup> By the first decade of the nineteenth century, the house and its five hundred acres had been sold to Thomas Swan of Alexandria.<sup>9</sup> It was probably during Swan's ownership that Chantilly fell into irretrievable disrepair. It may still have been standing in 1814, when Swan sold 170 acres of the tract to John Doleman, but the following year, when Virginia levied a special tax on any citizen who owned a house worth over \$500, Westmoreland County appraisers saw nothing to attract their attention at Chantilly.<sup>10</sup> By 1871, when George William Beale paid a visit to the site, only a "rude mound of stones" remained of the dwelling itself. Of nearby dependencies, only two sandstone chimneys remained.<sup>11</sup>

Because of its early demise, much of Chantilly's character and

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas Lee Shippen to William Shippen, Jr., 29 September 1790, Shippen Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. Thomas Lee Shippen was the son of Alice Lee, Richard Henry Lee's younger sister. Alonzo T. Dill and Mary Tyler Cheek, A Visit to Stratford and the Story of the Lees (Stratford: Robert E. Lee Memorial Association, 1980), p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> At his death Richard Henry Lee conveyed to his wife the lease for Chantilly. Will of Richard Henry Lee, 24 June 1794, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 19, pp. 29-32.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Swan way paying taxes on Chantilly by 1809. Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>10</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1814; Westmoreland County Personal Property Tax Records, 1815, Virginia State Library and Archives.

<sup>11</sup> The house itself actually had a brick foundation. Beale, "Chantilly: The Home of Richard Henry Lee," Old Dominion Magazine (1871), reprinted in Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 23 (December 1973), pp. 2409-2412.

appearance is past recovery. Nevertheless, some inferences about the dwelling's form and arrangement of rooms are possible, for in 1967 and again in 1972, Chantilly became the subject of some restrained but enlightening archaeological testing. Excavators uncovered brick foundations of a thickness that would support a one- or two-story structure built of wood. The foundations delineated a house with a central section that was 31 feet square flanked by two wings that each measured 26 by 21 feet. This form gave Chantilly east and west elevations of about 73 feet in length.<sup>12</sup>

The excavations were not sufficiently extensive to determine the position of interior partition walls, but documentary evidence offers some important clues. Thomas Lee Shippen wrote that Chantilly's "setting room which is very well ornamented is 30 feet by 18 and the dining room 24 feet by 20."<sup>13</sup> According to these dimensions, the "setting room" occupied about half of the dwelling's central square section, while the dining room fit comfortably into one of the two wings. Richard Henry Lee provided additional information about the interior arrangement of Chantilly when he noted in his diary the size of window panes in the dining room, parlor, nursery, hall, and chamber.<sup>14</sup> The parlor was apparently the "setting room" of Shippen's description, and by 1784, it had sustained the addition of a "large bow window" or "garden window" with panes of glass significantly smaller than those in other windows throughout the house. One winter, Richard Henry Lee wrote in his diary that he could see holes in the ice of the frozen river

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<sup>12</sup> Archaeology suggests that only the central section had a cellar. Jeffrey M. O'Dell, "1972 Excavations at the Chantilly Manor House Site, Westmoreland County, Virginia," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 23 (December 1973), p. 2417.

<sup>13</sup> Shippen to Shippen, 29 September 1790.

<sup>14</sup> Entry for 21 July 1784, Journal of Richard Henry Lee, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, quoted in O'Dell, "Excavations at Chantilly," p. 2420.

"about midway across the great cove upon the river shore looking thro my large bow window."<sup>15</sup> With this remark Lee revealed that the parlor--and its bow window--were positioned on the east side of the house so that the Lees might enjoy their dramatic Potomac River prospect.

Placing the other three first-floor rooms at Chantilly requires some guesswork. It was customary for large Virginia houses to have centered doorways on both long elevations. If Chantilly had this characteristic arrangement, then both the west and east sides of the dwelling must have been dominated by rooms that Virginians considered properly accessible to anyone permitted past the threshold.<sup>16</sup> The chamber and nursery--both principally bedrooms--were manifestly unsuitable for this function and so probably shared space in the wing opposite the dining room. This leaves the hall, a general sitting and living room, to occupy the remaining space on the west side of the house. At Chantilly, it may have contained the staircase as well.<sup>17</sup> Archaeological tests indicate that the two rooms in the central block of Chantilly were heated by a central chimney. Undoubtedly, there were also chimneys to provide fireplaces for the wings, but these have not been discovered. Architectural custom in early Virginia suggests that they were

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<sup>15</sup> Journal of Richard Henry Lee, quoted in O'Dell, "Excavations at Chantilly," p. 2420.

<sup>16</sup> Although they may have existed, archaeological tests did not uncover foundations of the porches or stoops that might have sheltered the entrances to the house.

<sup>17</sup> This reasoning closely follows Jeff O'Dell's own interpretation of the archaeological and documentary evidence concerning Chantilly. O'Dell, "Excavations at Chantilly," pp. 2421-2425. One problem with the resulting plan concerns the chamber and nursery: if they shared one of the two wings, they must have had quite unusual--and awkward--dimensions.



positioned at the north and south extremes of the house.

After his death in 1794, Richard Henry Lee's executors made a record of his personal property at Chantilly, and they proceeded room by room. Unfortunately, this document has disappeared; only a summary of the inventory survives. Although it lists the names of rooms, this description seems far too subjective to offer much reliable information about Chantilly. Nevertheless, it does mention that in addition to the "passage upstairs" where Richard Henry Lee measured his window glass, the upper story had one small chamber and four large ones. It also indicates that once Lee's children were grown, the nursery was converted to a library.<sup>18</sup> Outbuildings named in the inventory included a kitchen, a dairy, a blacksmith shop, a stable, and a barn. The kitchen and blacksmith shop may have accounted for the two stone chimneys that George William Beale saw at Chantilly in 1871.<sup>19</sup>

On its elevated site overlooking Currioman Bay, Chantilly was prominently on display, and as Richard Henry Lee's catalog of his wine stock suggests, life there could be sumptuous.<sup>20</sup> For these reasons, discussions of Chantilly have involved the conclusion that the house was an exceptionally imposing structure with refined classical forms and details.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, Chantilly appears to

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<sup>18</sup> Until at least 1787, the nursery was the domain of Lee's daughters and their friends. Lucinda Lee wrote: "Nancy [Lee] sleeps upstairs to-night with her Sister Pinkard. Milly [Washington, of Blenheim], Miss Leland, and myself have the nurcery to ourselves. We want Nancy very much but she is obliged to sleep upstairs." Entry for 10 November 1787, Lucinda Lee, Diary, p. 52.

<sup>19</sup> Description of Edmund Jennings Lee, quoted in Ethel Armes, The Great House of the Lees (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, Publishers, 1936), p. 105.

<sup>20</sup> Entry for 16 August 1788, Journal of Richard Henry Lee, quoted in O'Dell, "Excavations at Chantilly," p. 2420.

<sup>21</sup> In his analysis of the inventory, Edmund Jennings Lee implied that the house was three stories tall. Quoted in Armes, p.

have been a house relatively plain in appearance and a household comparatively relaxed in manner. Visiting the Grimes family in their home near Fredericksburg, Lucinda Lee exclaimed that her hosts "live in a very genteel stile . . . you can't conceive anything more nice or genteel than every[thing] was. I never was more pleased in my life."<sup>22</sup> Even allowing for the impulse of a sociable teenager to take her own situation for granted while idealizing the circumstances of an admired acquaintance, Lee's remark suggests that Chantilly and its domestic routines were relatively informal. While visiting Peckatone, Lee wrote that "dressing for dinner" was "a ceremony always practiced here" as if she well knew a household where it was not.<sup>23</sup> Her cousin Thomas Lee Shippen also pronounced Chantilly "rather commodious than elegant," although he praised it as the scene of "a most hearty welcome."<sup>24</sup>

Some two decades after Shippen's jolly visit, Chantilly stood empty. Archaeological tests found no layer of ash or charred debris to indicate that a fire ended Chantilly's useful life. In fact, the light scattering of artifacts in and around the foundations suggest that it was simply abandoned and allowed to fall down. The latest dateable artifacts reveal that habitation of Chantilly ended sometime during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup>

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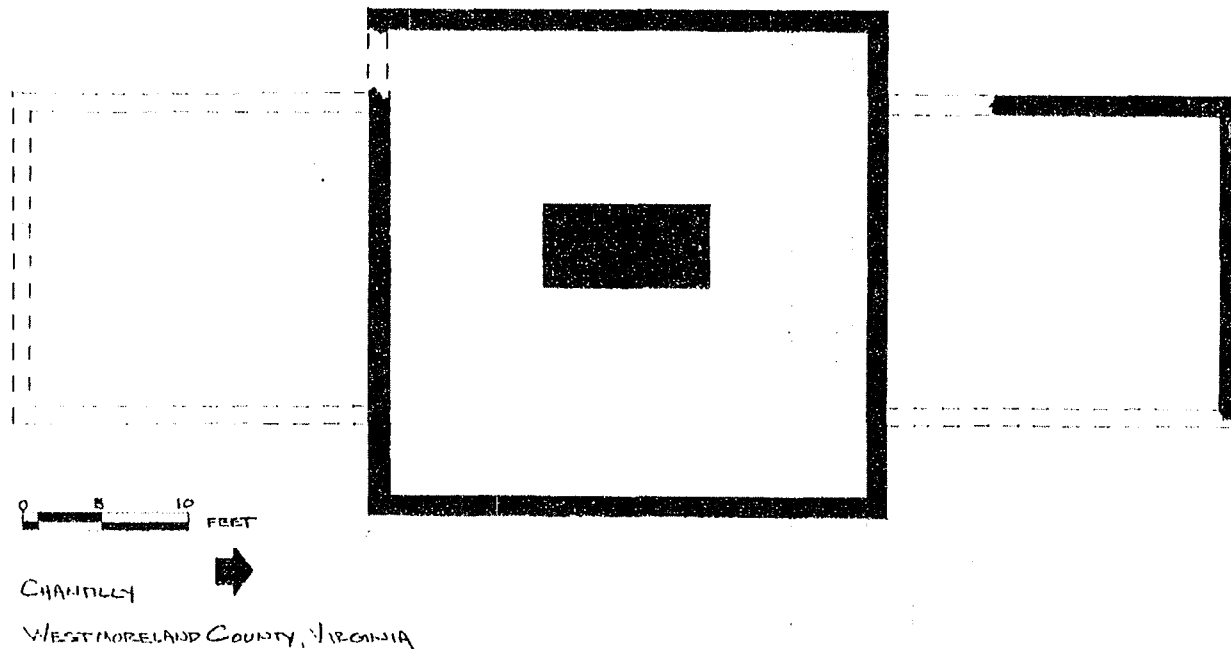
105. Jeff O'Dell offered the hypothesis that Chantilly was based on a design from Robert Morris, Select Architecture: Being Regular Designs of Plans and Elevations Well Suited to both Town and Country (London: R. Sayer, 1757). O'Dell, "Excavations at Chantilly," pp. 2420-2421.

<sup>22</sup> Entry for 21 September 1787, Lee, Diary, pp. 13-14.

<sup>23</sup> Entry for 16 October 1787, Lee, Diary, p. 34. See the entry for Peckatone elsewhere in this catalog.

<sup>24</sup> Shippen to Shippen, 29 September 1790.

<sup>25</sup> O'Dell, "Excavations at Chantilly," pp. 2418-2419.



Chantilly, Westmoreland County, Virginia, Plan of Archaeological Remains. After Jeffrey M. O'Dell, "1972 Excavations at the Chantilly Manor House Site, Westmoreland, Virginia," Quarterly Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Virginia 28 (September 1973), p. 2. (Drawing, Camille Wells.)

COPLE GLEBE HOUSE  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
ST. CLEMENTS ISLAND 7.5

The eighteenth-century glebe house of Cople Parish stands on a point of land created by the confluence of three small streams with Lower Machodoc Creek.<sup>1</sup> This substantial brick dwelling originally faced north, commanding a view across Parsons Creek and Machodock Neck toward the Potomac River. Set on a waterside site of level Tidewater terrain, Cople Glebe house was built not only to have a "prospect," as colonial Virginians called it, but to itself be part of the scene--a landmark for those who traveled by water.<sup>2</sup> In 1774, Philip Fithian and several members of Robert Carter's family took an outing in their new boat, the Harriot Lucy. Propelled by four oarsmen down Machodoc Creek, Fithian took great pleasure in the sight of "corn & tobacco growing, or cattle & sheep feeding along the brink of this river on both sides, or else groves of pines, savins, & oaks growing to the side of the bank." Near the mouth of the creek, the party "rowed by parson Smiths Glebe & in sight of his house in to the broad beautiful Potomack."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The modern names for these three streams are Weatherall Creek, Aimes Creek, and Glebe Creek, but in the middle of the eighteenth century, the northernmost stream was known as Parsons Creek, and during the early nineteenth century, all three streams were considered branches of Glebe Creek. Boundary Agreement of Frances Wright and Henry Lee, 9 August 1744, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 10, p. 150. Carolyn H. Jett generously provided this reference. Plat of Cople Glebe, November, 1811, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 22, pp. 322-323.

<sup>2</sup> For more on Virginia planters's emphasis on a dwelling's view or prospect, see Chapter 3.

<sup>3</sup> In Fithian's account, Machodoc Creek is a river. Hunter Dickinson Farish, editor, Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers

The site of Cople Glebe house was part of five hundred acres patented by Thomas Youell in 1653.<sup>4</sup> Thirty years later, Governor Culpeper penned an evaluation of the Anglican parson's circumstances in Virginia: "I know of four parishes in the colony that besides house, glebe, and perquisites are really worth 80£ per annum." There was Bruton Parish in James City County, two Gloucester County parishes, and "that Mr. Secretary Spencer lived in, Westmoreland County. But I fear the last, when he leaves it will not be worth it by a good deal."<sup>5</sup> This ambiguous statement implies that Cople Parish owned a plantation for the support of its minister by 1683, but the vestry might well have bought and sold one or more glebes before the Youell parcel was acquired.<sup>6</sup> There is no documentary record of precisely when or through what course of events this transaction occurred, but by 1744, when several neighboring landowners appeared in court to resolve a disputed boundary, the Cople Parish glebe had come to represent almost precisely the extent of Youell's patent.<sup>7</sup>

Fithian 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1957), pp 144-145.

<sup>4</sup> David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), p. 71.

<sup>5</sup> William and Mary Quarterly 1st Series, 27 (January 1919), p. 208—209. John Scrimgeour, the minister of Cople Parish between 1680 and 1693, was living at the dwelling of Nicholas Spence when he died. Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p. 22; Westmoreland County Order Book 1690-1698, p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> In 1763, for example, the churchwardens of Nottoway Parish in Southampton County offered the glebe for sale. The Nottoway glebe was one of six to appear in Virginia newspaper advertisements between 1736 and 1780. Virginia Gazette (Royle), 8 July 1763, p. 3, c. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Wright and Lee Agreement, p. 150; Plat of Cople Glebe, pp. 322-323.

Although most Anglican ministers who served Virginia parishes during the eighteenth century made the glebes their place of residence, some parsons leased their glebe to other planters, accepting the rent as part of their income. In either case, it was customary for the parish vestry to authorize the construction and repair of all glebe buildings. The houses they paid to build were usually modest in size and structure, and they were often built on earthfast posts with wooden or clay chimneys. In 1704, the vestry of Petsworth Parish in Gloucester County agreed to build a glebe house that was 36 feet long and 20 feet wide, "to be framed on good white oak sills and to stand upon [wooden] blocks."<sup>8</sup> In 1754, the vestry of Antrim Parish in Halifax County engaged workmen to build a wood-framed and planked glebe house measuring 28 feet by 16 feet with "at each end a dirt or plastered chimney."<sup>9</sup>

Houses such as these remained common for glebes, as they were for most Virginia plantations, until the end of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, starting in the 1740s, some of the more populous and prosperous parishes built larger and more substantial glebe houses for their clergy. The vestry of Christ Church Parish in Lancaster County decided in 1744 to erect "a new brick house, built as soon as may be at the glebe of this parish for the minister."<sup>10</sup> In 1750 churchwardens of Christ Church Parish in Middlesex County announced that the vestry wanted builders for "a glebe house fifty foot long from out to out thirty feet wide two story high the walls

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<sup>8</sup> C. G. Chamberlayne, editor, The Vestry Book of Petsworth Parish, Gloucester County, Virginia 1677-1793 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1979), p. 85.

<sup>9</sup> Vestry Book of Antrim Parish, 1752-1818, p. 22, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>10</sup> Vestry Book of Christ Church Parish, Lancaster County, 1739-1786, minutes of a meeting dated 25 April 1744, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

[of] brick."<sup>11</sup>

The residents of Cople Parish in Westmoreland County were yet a third population of Virginia parishioners to sustain the expense of a handsome new brick glebe house during the 1740s. The record of the vestry's deliberations are lost, but the house itself survives and so it is possible to know that the structure they ultimately commissioned was about fifty feet long and twenty-one feet wide. Built to two stories above a full cellar, the house had five bays on the north facade and three bays on the south side. A gable or hipped roof covered the structure.<sup>12</sup> Centered on the first story of both long elevations was a doorway that opened into a passage. This circulation space divided two rooms on each floor. Interior end chimneys probably supplied heat to all four rooms. The first characteristic of this house to attract attention was probably the handsome Flemish-bond masonry. Built as it was in the midst of a landscape where even brick chimneys and footings were exceptional, the Cople Glebe house was quite a striking sight with its regular glazed headers and its segmental-arched doors and windows.

In 1740 Charles Rose became the new parson for Cople Parish, and it may have been the young Scot's arrival that prompted the vestry to consider building a more substantial new glebe house.<sup>13</sup> The dwelling was apparently just completed in 1747, when Charles Rose's older brother and fellow parson "rode to Mr. Spence's, Northumberland, with Mr. Dickson and my son John in our way to make my brother Charles the first visit at his glebe."<sup>14</sup> Rose

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<sup>11</sup> Vestry Book of Christ Church, Middlesex County, 1663-1767, p. 263, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>12</sup> A complete rebuilding at the turn of this century has obliterated every trace of the original roof design.

<sup>13</sup> Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p. 22.

<sup>14</sup> Ralph Emmett Fall, editor, The Diary of Robert Rose: A View of Virginia by a Scottish Colonial Parson (Verona, Virginia.: McClure

served Cople Parish until his death in 1761, and it is said that he was buried on the glebe. He was succeeded by Thomas Smith, the "parson Smith" of Fithian's account.<sup>15</sup> About ten years after Smith first assumed his duties, the parish vestry decided to build an addition onto his glebe dwelling. In the early fall of 1771, churchwardens Richard Henry Lee and George Turberville published an advertisement in the colony newspaper.<sup>16</sup>

The vestry of Cople parish, in the county of Westmoreland, having determined to make an addition of brick work 28 feet in length, with the width of the present glebe house, and other repairs on the said glebe, such undertakers as are willing to engage in the said business are desired to meet the churchwardens of the parish, at Cople glebe on the second Tuesday in October next.<sup>17</sup>

As a result of this meeting, the selected undertaker set about constructing a two-story brick addition to the west gable end of the original dwelling. The masons employed for the project were careful to match the segmental-arched openings and the plain

Press, 1977), p. 24. Robert Rose began this trip from his own glebe in Essex County. St. Anne's Glebe House is another of the few surviving glebe houses. With its two-story form and Flemish-bond brickwork, it looks much like the Cople Glebe House must have looked when it was newly finished.

<sup>15</sup> Smith was a Virginian who had been educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> Documentary and architectural evidence suggests that Richard Henry Lee of Chantilly and George Turberville of Peckatone had recently built--or were in the process of constructing--substantial new dwellings of their own. See the entries for Chantilly and Peckatone elsewhere in this catalog.

<sup>17</sup> Lee and Turberville advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Rind), 5 September 1771, p. 4, c. 1.



beveled water table of the original dwelling, but they laid up the new Flemish-bond brickwork without regular glazed headers, for this decorative device was no longer considered fashionable in the 1770s.

The new wing gave the Cople Glebe house several more interior spaces, including an additional room on both the first and second story. Small square windows in the new end wall suggest that these rooms originally had closets built into the space created by the interior chimney structure. The dimensions of the addition, as well as the placement of second-story windows on both the north and south elevations, suggest that there was also a large unheated closet framed into the east end of the addition. This end of the wing may have enclosed a new passage and staircase built to provide independent access to the new west rooms. The construction of the wing probably occasioned alterations in the dwelling's original woodwork and the established room functions undoubtedly shifted, but evidence of this disappeared when the house was aggressively remodeled around 1900.

How did Parson Smith use his new rooms? The inventory of his estate, taken after his death in 1789, provides no answers. If both he and his predecessor had organized their household in customary ways, then the two first-story rooms of the 1740 glebe house were designated as the hall--a general living room with accoutrements for sitting, dining, and entertaining--and the chamber, or principal bedroom. By 1770, however, the minister and the vestry apparently came to the conclusion that the glebe house should have a separate room for dining, a social activity that gained increasing importance in Virginia during the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup> It is

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<sup>18</sup> Mark R. Wenger, "The Dining Room in Early Virginia," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture III, Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, editors, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), pp. 149-159.

possible that the new first-story room was fashionably embellished for this purpose. It is also possible that the addition was conceived as a suite of private rooms--perhaps with a chamber and a library--while the original hall and chamber were reorganized into a hall and dining room.<sup>19</sup> In either case, Smith had gained a commodious new space in which to entertain those parishioners whose own social events he enjoyed with active, if restrained, participation.<sup>20</sup>

Thomas Smith was succeeded as minister of Cople Parish by James Elliott in 1790 and Washington Nelson in about 1805.<sup>21</sup> By this date, however, the system of supporting clergymen and their glebes with parish levies had dissolved along with the disestablishment of Virginia's Anglican Church. In 1811, the Westmoreland County Overseers of the Poor, to whom the glebe had been assigned, decided to sell it.<sup>22</sup> The purchaser was John Chandler, who made the 516-acre tract his dwelling plantation. He was living on the site in 1815, when he paid a special tax for the glebe house, which was considered worth \$900.<sup>23</sup> Chandler

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<sup>19</sup> Most of Thomas Smith's inventory is devoted to his 114 books. Smith Inventory, 28 December 1789, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 6, pp. 131-134.

<sup>20</sup> Philip Fithian attended a party at Lee Hall in January of 1774, but ever conscious of his responsibilities as a tutor and divinity student, he refrained from much of the merriment. After he was provoked to explain "why I would come to the ball & neither dance nor play cards," Fithian privately noted that "Parson Smiths & Parson Gibberns [of Washington Parish] wives dance, but I saw neither of the clergymen either dance or game." Farish, editor, Journal of Fithian, p. 57.

<sup>21</sup> Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p.23.

<sup>22</sup> Overseers of the Poor to Chandler, 26 November 1811, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 22, pp. 320-321.

<sup>23</sup> In 1814, the Westmoreland County land tax collector indicated that Chandler's land "on Machodoc Creek--called the Glebe" was not tenanted but in his "own possession." Westmoreland County

cultivated the glebe tract himself until 1833, when he began leasing the property to his son Hannibal Chandler for \$30 a year.<sup>24</sup> The elder Chandler lived on in the glebe house for eleven years more. When he died, his appraisers reported that about three quarters of his personal estate was represented by forty-two slaves. There was also livestock and plantation equipment worth over \$2000. Chandler also had almost \$600 in household accoutrements.<sup>25</sup> The executors did not choose to categorize these furnishings and embellishments according to the rooms in which they were found, but the interspersing of window curtains and hearth tools indicates that the appraisers made their way through a chamber, a dining room, and a parlor on the first floor. Above stairs, they found only two rooms in use. Both were furnished as bedrooms.<sup>26</sup>

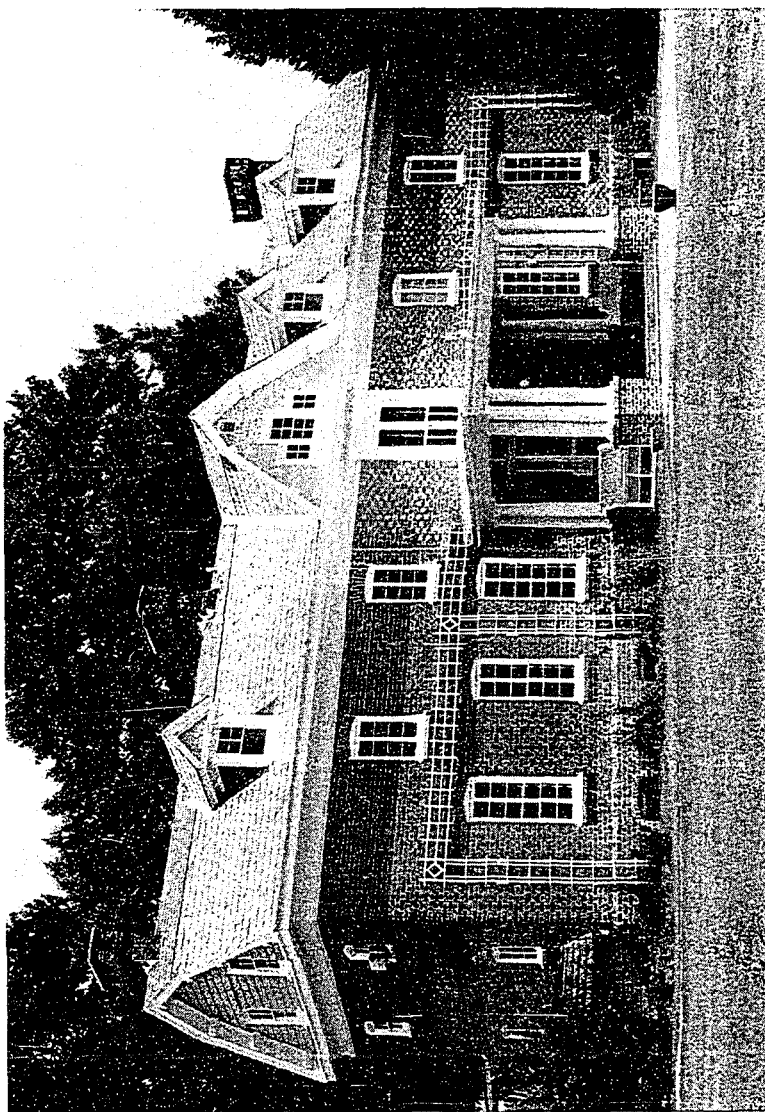
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Land Tax Records. The following year, John Chandler was one of fifty-one Westmoreland County landowners to be living in a house worth over \$500. Westmoreland County Personal Property Tax Records, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

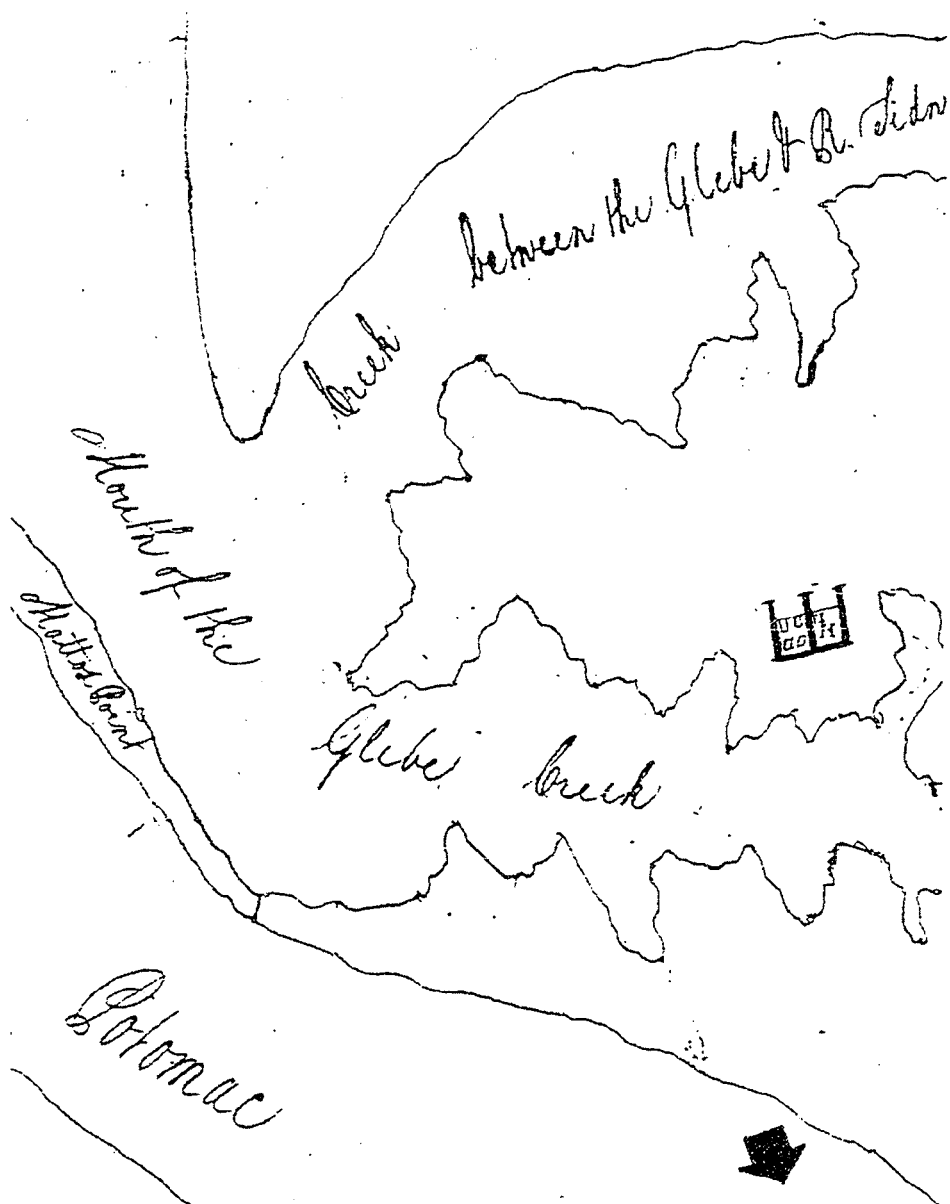
<sup>24</sup> Chandler to Chandler, 20 August 1833, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 27, pp. 481-483.

<sup>25</sup> Chandler's total personal estate was worth \$12,725.56. Of this amount his slaves represented \$9560. His stock and plantation tools were worth \$2572.52 and his household good amounted to \$593.04. Chandler Inventory, 6 November 1844, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 20, pp. 32-35.

<sup>26</sup> Chandler Inventory, pp. 33-34.



Cople Glebe House, Westmoreland County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)



Plat showing Cople Glebe House, Westmoreland County, Virginia.  
Overseers of the Poor to John Chandler, November 1811,  
Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 22, pp. 322-323.

CURRIOMAN  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
STRATFORD HALL 7.5

Since the turn of this century, the surviving fragment of Currioman has performed unpretentious service as the rear ell of the two-story framed and weatherboarded Sanford House. Measuring about 17 feet square, this eighteenth-century brick structure retains none of its early woodwork, and with the possible exception of the east doorway, none of the current openings are in their original locations. The existing chimney as well as the wood-framed second story are also nineteenth-century additions.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the masonry remains of Currioman contain several important clues concerning the architectural history of this early dwelling. The four finished corners confirm that this brick segment of Currioman was always a square one-room structure. Extensive patching and subsequent painting have also failed to obscure the original English-bond brick courses below the water table or the bright scheme of regular glazed headers in the Flemish-bond brickwork above. This arresting pattern of masonry, which lost its stylish appeal after 1750, indicates that Currioman was built during the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This brick chimney, centered on the west wall of the house, is laid up with one row of header bricks for every six rows of stretchers. A section of this wall has been rebuilt to include several courses of recessed racking. This patching probably closed over an earlier door or window opening, but it also permits the masonry of the chimney to bond more securely with the masonry of the house itself.

<sup>2</sup> The brickwork at Cople Glebe House and Wilton has similar brickwork. So does Yeocomico Church, which was built in 1706 and substantially enlarged around 1740. Dell Upton, Holy Things and

The land on which the dwelling stands was part of a thousand-acre tract that Thomas Speke patented in 1649 and 1651.<sup>3</sup> The property was known by the Algonquin name "Curryoman" by 1660, when Speke made complicated provisions for its disposition in his will.<sup>4</sup> During the first decade of the eighteenth century, John Chilton succeeded in repatenting half of the Currioman tract.<sup>5</sup> The other half he acquired by purchase from John Gerrard.<sup>6</sup> Whatever the extent to which the property had been improved before, John Chilton, a merchant as well as a planter, decided to make Currioman his dwelling plantation. He chose for his house site a high ridge with a long north-south axis and an elevation that falls sharply away on three sides toward the shores of the Potomac.<sup>7</sup>

Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia (New York and Cambridge: Architectural History Foundation and MIT Press, 1986), pp. 66-69. See the entries for Cople Glebe House and Wilton elsewhere in this catalog.

<sup>3</sup> David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), p. 67.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Speke conveyed the tract to his son Thomas Speke. If the boy died without issue--and he did--then the property was to be divided between the decedent's brother John Speke and his nephew Thomas Gerrard. If Gerrard died without issue--and he did--his half of the tract was to descend to his younger brother John Gerrard. Will of Thomas Speke, 14 January 1660, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 1, p. 103. The results of Speke's provisions are detailed in the deed by which John Gerrard's son conveyed his half of Currioman to John Chilton. John Gerrard to Jonn Chilton, 29 June 1709, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 4, p. 212.

<sup>5</sup> Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p. 52. John Chilton was in Virginia as early as 1685, when he was fined for a misdemeanor by the vestry of Middlesex County. William Meade, Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1857) v. 2, p. 127.

<sup>6</sup> Gerrard to Chilton, p. 212.

<sup>7</sup> That this is the site of John Chilton's house is suggested by the nearby cemetery in which John Chilton's stone table tomb is the

According to an eighteenth-century visitor to this vicinity, the site "commands a much finer view than Stratford by reason of a large bay into which the Potowmac forms itself opposite" to the ridge.<sup>8</sup>

This bay and John Chilton's plantation, both called "Currioman," were considered significant Potomac River landmarks by 1737, when they appeared on the proprietor's map of the Northern Neck.<sup>9</sup> Such recognition was enhanced by Chilton's ship, which plied the waters of the Chesapeake--and possibly of the Atlantic Ocean as well--bearing the name "Coriomen."<sup>10</sup>

When John Chilton died in 1726, he was interred about a hundred yards south of his dwelling site beneath a table tomb that records his age as about sixty.<sup>11</sup> The house he left behind was probably built mostly of wood, but it clearly contained several rooms. After her husband's death, Mary Chilton settled herself into the parlor and two auxiliary rooms which probably occupied one end of the Currioman dwelling.<sup>12</sup>

only grave marker to survive. It is also possible that Chilton's son or grandson moved his monument to this location sometime later in the eighteenth century. Without the benefit of archaeology, the most that can be confirmed is that the surviving brick structure was a component of the Currioman dwelling site by 1750.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Lee Shippen to Dr. William Shippen, Jr., 29 September 1790, Shippen Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

<sup>9</sup> William Mayo, "A Map of Northern Neck of Virginia, the Territory of the Right Honorable Thomas Lord Fairfax," 1737. Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>10</sup> Inventory of John Chilton Estate, 22 February 1727, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 1, p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> The stone reads: "Here lyeth in hopes of a joyful resurrection the body of Mr. John Chilton merchant who departed this life the 17th day of July Anno Domini 1726 aged about 60 years."

<sup>12</sup> Mary Chilton's executors found her belongings in the parlor, parlor chamber, parlor closet and an adjoining passage. Inventory of



In his will, John Chilton made provisions for an elder son, but he emphasized that his younger son Thomas Chilton was to have the "whom [home] plantation."<sup>13</sup> At the time of his father's death, Thomas Chilton was in the process of erecting his own dwelling at Currioman. The appraisers of the estate permitted him to claim some plank "sawn on the said land, which he alledged to be wood for the building of a house already begun on the mansion plantation."<sup>14</sup> Although he may have completed this structure, it was probably Thomas Chilton and his family who filled out the household where Mary Chilton dwelt until her death in 1737.

If he was like most merchant-planters with an enviable inheritance and a successful career, Thomas Chilton eventually made several additions and improvements to his father's dwelling site.<sup>15</sup> One of these was the brick structure that still stands at Currioman. Possibly because his mother claimed for her own use the largest or best existing room in the house, Thomas Chilton may have commissioned the construction of a one-story one-room brick addition to the north end of the wooden dwelling. This new wing was comparatively small, but Chilton was relying on the quality of its masonry rather than the size of his undertaking to convey a look

Mary Chilton Estate, 31 May 1737, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 1, pp. 179-181. The parlor is an eighteenth-century room that invariably appeared in conjunction with a hall. In no known Virginia inventory is "parlor" the designation for a dwelling's one principal room.

<sup>13</sup> Will of John Chilton, 28 September 1726, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 8, p. 67.

<sup>14</sup> John Chilton Inventory, p. 46.

<sup>15</sup> John Chilton left behind a personal estate worth about £1700. Even though he had to share this inheritance with his mother, his brother, and his father's creditors, Thomas Chilton was still far wealthier than most of his contemporaries. John Chilton Inventory, p. 46.

of substantial prosperity.

When the brick addition was completed, the Chiltons apparently rearranged their household so that main floor of the brick structure became Currioman's hall. Here the family entertained guests and conducted business, and when Thomas Chilton died in 1765, it was in this room that his most expensive belongings--including an eight-day clock and a "scrutore" or writing desk--could be found.<sup>16</sup> "The great couch in the hall" was also one of the pieces of furniture Thomas Chilton specifically mentioned in his will. Fashioned of mahogany, this couch was the most costly piece of furniture at Currioman.<sup>17</sup>

Thomas Chilton bequeathed Currioman to his son, another Thomas Chilton who lived on the plantation until his death in 1781. Because he died intestate, the Westmoreland County Court appointed surveyors to establish a dower for Thomas Chilton's widow. The resulting plat indicates several things about the Chiltons's landscape and their livelihood. A shop first mentioned in the 1765 inventory of Thomas Chilton was located on the northeast corner of Chilton's Crossroad. The Chiltons also profited from a grist mill which was built on South Creek just to the southwest of their dwelling. Currioman house itself had at least two chimneys by 1781, and it faced east, overlooking a road that connected landing sites on the coves of Cold Harbor and South creeks.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Thomas Chilton's inventory is not arranged by room, but the document does make mention of the chamber, a passage, and a back porch. Inventory of Thomas Chilton Estate, 17 October 1765, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 4, pp. 222-223.

<sup>17</sup> Will of Thomas Chilton, 24 September 1765, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 14, pp. 347; Thomas Chilton Inventory, p. 222.

<sup>18</sup> Plat of Currioman, Estate of Thomas Chilton, 9 December 1781, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia. Modern maps

Thomas Chilton's widow married Samuel Templeman, who paid taxes on 500 acres of Currioman--including the dwelling site--through 1789.<sup>19</sup> The land was bought by a member of the Sanford family in 1824.<sup>20</sup> With the exception of the decade between 1935 and 1945, members of the Sanford family have owned Currioman ever since.<sup>21</sup>

Eventually, the two inlets of Cold Harbor and South creeks lost their capacity to receive water craft of any size, and the dominant landing was moved to a low, flat site directly on the navigable waters of Currioman Bay. Sometime during the nineteenth century, Westmoreland County officials authorized the construction of a more direct east-west route between Chilton's Crossroad and the new landing. This involved a deep cut across the ridge and very near the Currioman house itself. The resulting steep bank changed the most compelling orientation of this dwelling site from east to south. When William Hartwell Sanford hired his cousin Oliver Sanford to replace all but the brick room of old Currioman, it seemed obvious to everyone involved that the new house should overlook the road to Currioman Landing, rather than the ravine and the ancient bay beyond.<sup>22</sup>

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indicate that South Creek has become Currioman Creek.

<sup>19</sup> Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p. 17; Westmoreland County Land Tax Records. 1782-1789, Virginia State Library and Archives.

<sup>20</sup> Harry Lee Arnest III and Alice Preston Moore, "A Survey of Period Architecture," Westmoreland County, Virginia 1653-1983, Walter Biscoe Norris, Jr., editor, (Montross: Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors, 1983), p. 236.

<sup>21</sup> Charles E. Stuart, special commissioner for the estate of W. H. Sanford, to Edward O. McDowell, 15 January 1935, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 92, p. 475; Edward O. McDowell to William R. and Cora Sanford, 29 March 1945, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 102, p. 273.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with William and Cora Sanford, 25 June 1991.

Plat showing Currioman, Westmoreland County, Virginia. Estate of Thomas Chilton, 9 December 1781. (Virginia Historical Society.)

ELBA  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
MACHODOC 7.5

Elba was built on the top of a hill in a part of Westmoreland County that eighteenth-century Northern Neck residents often called "the forest."<sup>1</sup> Farthest from the river shores and highest of any terrain on the peninsula, the forest was not usually favored by affluent planters for their building sites until near the end of the century. Nevertheless, Elba was standing by 1766, and its most common historic designation as "the brick house" suggests how it must have differed from the other colonial houses scattered along this inland and upland spine of the Northern Neck.<sup>2</sup>

Elba is a sturdy three-bay brick house with a gable roof and two exterior end chimneys. It is difficult to discern much else about the dwelling's original appearance, for over many generations of use the house has been both painted and sandblasted. All of the original window and door openings have been enlarged, and the west gable end has been completely rebuilt. Elba's Flemish-bond brickwork is still discernible, however, and there is a water table of quarter-

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Ball of Morattico in Lancaster County referred to one of his plantations as the "forest quarter." Joseph Ball Letterbook 1743-1780, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. James Gordon had a "forest store" among his commercial interests on the Northern Neck. "Journal of Col. James Gordon, of Lancaster County, Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly 1st Series, 11 (October 1902), p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> While "Elba" may be a well established name for the house, it does not appear before 1900 in the documentary record of this site. In 1944 Lillian Cox Atwell conveyed "my home Elba" to her nephew James H. Cox. She expressed the "earnest desire that this, the last of the Cox estate, be left in the family name." Will of Lillian Cox Atwell, 14 October 1944, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 102, p. 113.

round molded bricks. The surviving east chimney has two sets of paved shoulders. Because the stack of this chimney sets out from the gable-end wall in an unusual way, it is possible that this chimney originally served a wood-framed structure.<sup>3</sup>

Elba has a central-passage plan with two rooms on both the first floor and in the loft or half-story above. As is consistent with the heavily altered character of the exterior, little of Elba's original interior appearance survives. The partition walls are probably in their initial locations, and several interior door surrounds may date from the eighteenth century. The closed-stringer staircase was rebuilt or at least retrimmed with Federal-style moldings in the early nineteenth century, and two six-panel doors probably date from the same remodeling. The remaining interior finish of Elba dates from the middle of the nineteenth century through the late twentieth century. Much of the present character of the house is determined by a rear ell which was added during the 1960s, and a rear wing which was constructed since 1982.<sup>4</sup>

The site of Elba was part of a thousand-acre tract that Vincent Cox patented in 1665 and 1667.<sup>5</sup> Upon his death in 1698, Cox divided his patent--as well as some additional purchased land--among three sons. The Elba tract apparently descended to Charnock Cox as "the plantation where he now lives."<sup>6</sup> Charnock Cox, in

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<sup>3</sup> Evidence that eighteenth-century builders sometimes incorporated standing brick chimneys into later brick houses survives at the Weblin House in Virginia Beach and on the present kitchen dependency at Westover in Charles City County. Mark R. Wenger, "Westover: William Byrd's Mansion Reconsidered," (M. A. Thesis: University of Virginia School of Architecture, 1980), p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Thomas Crowder, 20 July 1988.

<sup>5</sup> Vincent Cox patented four hundred acres in 1665 and an adjoining 665 acres in 1667. David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> Will of Vincent Cox, 26 October 1698, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 2, p. 174.

turn, divided the land between his sons Peter and Presley Cox, who were already grown and managing sections of their patrimony in 1735.<sup>7</sup> By 1766, the year of his own death, Presley Cox had followed his father's example of settling the division of real estate among his heirs during his lifetime. His will involves only bequests of money, slaves, and household valuables to a son-in-law, several grandchildren, and his sons Fleet and William.<sup>8</sup>

The inventory of Presley Cox's estate indicates that he was well to do--his total estate value was £586--but that he lived modestly. Livestock worth £95 represented 16 percent of his personal wealth, and a family of slaves was appraised at £165, or 28 percent of his total estate. Cox's inventory does not reveal how he had organized his household, but he ate decently on "delft & stoneware" using one of "13 new spoons." He owned no forks, no silver in any form, and no accoutrements for the fashionable pastime of drinking tea.<sup>9</sup>

Presley Cox chose to divide his land in such a way that the site of Elba eventually descended to his son Fleet. It was probably in his hands in 1782, by which time William Cox was dead, and Fleet Cox was charged with 2080 acres of land in Westmoreland County.<sup>10</sup> Such a substantial landholding placed Cox among the county's eleven

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<sup>7</sup> In 1735, Charnock Cox conveyed, by deed of gift, fifty acres to each of his sons Peter and Presley Cox. This document specifies that in each case, the land was part of the "plantation whereon he now lives." Cox to Cox, 3 June 1735, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 8, p. 302.

<sup>8</sup> Will of Presley Cox, 30 September 1766, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 14, p. 393.

<sup>9</sup> Inventory of Presley Cox Estate, 30 September 1766, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 4, pp. 228-229. For more on household goods and standard of living, see Chapter 4.

<sup>10</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1782. The estate of William Cox was charged for 560 acres in nearby Cherry Point Neck. Northumberland County Land Records, 1782, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

wealthiest heads of household, and it suggests how well the Cox family had used their success as planters to offset three generations of partitioned estates.<sup>11</sup>

The dwelling now known as "Elba" was first specifically mentioned in Fleet Cox's will of 1791. Concerned about the welfare of his smallest sons, Cox charged his principal heir and namesake with the responsibility of boarding, educating, and settling sums of money on the two boys. If Fleet Cox II failed in these duties, he was to give up a substantial component of his inheritance. This included, the elder Fleet Cox wrote, "the lands and brick house where my father liv'd."<sup>12</sup> In making his bequest conditional, Fleet Cox not only insured that his younger sons would be fairly treated by their adult brother. He also indicated that Elba had been the dwelling of Presley Cox, that it was standing by 1766, and that he himself had chosen to live elsewhere.

Fleet Cox the younger made the same decision. In 1799, when his own will was proved, Fleet Cox II gave to his son Presley "all my home house plantation," and to his son Fleet Cox III, he conveyed "that tract of land known by the name of the brick house tract whereon my grandfather Presley Cox lived heretofore."<sup>13</sup> It is likely that by this date, the Fleet Cox "home house" was larger and more expensively finished than Elba has ever been. In 1815, Presley Cox was assessed additional taxes for owning a dwelling worth \$1500, while his brother Fleet Cox III escaped notice at Elba, which was considered worth under \$500.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Fleet Cox and the ten other planters who owned over two thousand acres represented the top 1.4 percent of Westmoreland County's 771 households. Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1782.

<sup>12</sup> Will of Fleet Cox, 7 January 1791, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 18, p. 191.

<sup>13</sup> Will of Fleet Cox II, 23 May 1799, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 20, p. 8.



Fleet Cox III died without offspring in 1816. He conveyed most of his estate--including Elba and the nine hundred acres on which he paid taxes--to his younger brother Downing Cox.<sup>15</sup> From Downing Cox's estate, most of the tract descended to Fleet W. Cox between 1860 and 1870. It was during the ownership of Fleet W. Cox that Elba came to be identified consistently in the land tax records as "brick house."<sup>16</sup> The estate of Fleet W. Cox was divided among his heirs in 1894, and over the course of the twentieth century, the land has filtered out of the family.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> By comparison, Walnut Hill was considered worth \$1500. Stratford was assessed at \$3500. Westmoreland County Personal Property Tax Records, 1815, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia. See the entries for Walnut Hill and Stratford elsewhere in this catalog.

<sup>15</sup> Fleet Cox Will, 27 May 1816, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 23, p. 175; Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1816, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>16</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Lists, 1853-1890, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>17</sup> Division of Fleet W. Cox Estate, 17 October 1894, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 56, p. 189. In two 1963 transactions, Cox heirs sold Elba and a surrounding tract of about seventy acres to Lloyd Griffith. Cox to Griffith, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 186, pp. 431 and 454.



Elba, Westmoreland County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)

THE HAGUE  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
MACHODOC 7.5

The Hague is a wood-framed and weatherboarded house that was probably built by the Bailey family during the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Set on a low brick foundation, the dwelling also has two identical exterior chimneys that are made of uniform dark red bricks laid up in a Flemish-bond pattern. Double sets of paved shoulders denote the presence of fireplaces on both the main story and in the half-story above. As the four-bay facade suggests, the interior space on both the main and upper floors of the Hague is organized with a large square-proportioned room on one side of an off-center passage and a smaller room of rectangular dimensions on the other. The two rooms in the upper story are illuminated by small square end-wall windows as well as by dormers set into the lower planes of the gambrel roof. Original framing exposed in the attic confirms that the ridgeline of this roof was built with clipped ends. The roof also has a pronounced flair at the eaves. Such refinements of the carpentry, combined as they were with the solid, careful masonry of the chimneys, give this house a thoughtfully crafted appearance. In language common to eighteenth-century building contracts, the Hague was constructed in a very "good and workmanlike" manner.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the original interior finish survives at the Hague. Most notable is the molded architrave around the fireplace in the smaller

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<sup>1</sup> This common way of describing a substantially constructed and well finished house appears often in eighteenth-century documents. See, for example, a 1777 newspaper announcement that builders might bid on the construction of a house for the estate of Samuel Hargrove. Virginia Gazette (Purdie), 24 October 1777, p. 3, c. 3.

first-story room. Nevertheless, like all structures old enough to have met the needs of many generations, this dwelling has been remodeled several times. A modest updating of woodwork during the Federal period has been mostly supplanted by the large windows and sidelighted doorway that were added later in the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Around 1900, the entire house was transformed into the rear ell of a newly constructed two-story dwelling, but this addition was subsequently detached and moved to another site nearby.<sup>3</sup> At about the same time, an ell was built onto the rear of the eighteenth-century house, some new woodwork was added to the larger first-floor room, and the enclosed stair was substantially rebuilt.

Unlike most surviving eighteenth-century houses on the Northern Neck, the Hague is oriented not toward a nearby watercourse but toward the intersection of two heavily traveled colonial roads. One of these led from Beales Millpond and Nomini Hall through Coles Neck, with its landings on Machodoc Creek and the Potomac River. The other road was busy with traffic between Nomini Creek Ferry and Kinsale on the Yeocomico River.<sup>4</sup> This intersection was once in the midst of two thousand acres that Richard Lee claimed by patent in 1652.<sup>5</sup> Eventually, a quantity of

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<sup>2</sup> Federal-period moldings trim two door frames that are set into the knee walls of the rooms above stairs. There is identical trim around the two dormer windows in the smaller upstairs room. Italianate moldings around the main entrance and the three south windows on the main floor confirm that these are replacements--and certainly enlargements--of the original openings.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Lloyd Griffith, 5 June 1989. This added structure is visible in a Works Projects Administration photo of the Hague in the collections of the Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>4</sup> These roads are now Virginia Secondary Highway 612 and Virginia Primary Highway 202 respectively.

this land found its way--possibly by marriage--into the hands of the Bailey family. In his will of 1786, Daniel Bailey conveyed his sense of the property as an ancestral holding, asking of his brothers and executors "that the said lands may never be sold out of the family."<sup>6</sup> Two years later, however, his brothers sold 250 acres of their inheritance to John Hague.<sup>7</sup> By 1796, the Baileys or their agents had sold an addition one hundred acres to John and Joseph Hague.<sup>8</sup>

It is a local tradition that this intersection has always been known for trade, and apparently the Hagues acquired the Bailey plantation with enterprise in mind.<sup>9</sup> By the end of the century, the Hagues had lent their surname to this spot, a distinction usually resulting from conspicuous or protracted association with a nearby shop or store.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the Hague dwelling was probably built as one

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<sup>5</sup> David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), p. 72.

<sup>6</sup> Will of Daniel Bailey, 30 November 1786, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 17, p. 156.

<sup>7</sup> In May of 1788 John Hague conveyed to Stephen Self a deed of trust on 250 acres of land which Hague had just bought from Samuel Bailey and Vincent Smith Bailey. Book of Westmoreland County Loose Papers [Deeds 1706-1804 and Wills 1755-1800], p. 44. Carolyn H. Jett kindly supplied this reference.

<sup>8</sup> Vincent Smith Bailey sold sixty acres to John and Joseph Hague in 1789. John Rust, acting on the behalf of Vincent Smith Bailey's heirs, sold forty acres of land to Joseph Hague in 1796. Bailey to Hague, 16 December 1789, Westmoreland Couty Deed/Will Book 18, pp. 208-209; Rust to Hague, 14 January 1796, Westmoreland Couty Deed/Will Book 19, pp. 140-141.

<sup>9</sup> Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p. 58.

<sup>10</sup> For example, the modern Westmoreland County crossroads called "Chiltons" is the eighteenth-century site of Thomas Chilton's blacksmith shop. Plat of Currioman Estate of Thomas Chilton, 9 December 1781, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

of several structures that combined the characteristics of a plantation dwelling site with those of a commercial crossroads.

Several miles west of the Hague, at the place where the main road linking the courthouses of Westmoreland and Richmond counties met the road to Nomini Creek Ferry, Samuel Templeman owned just such a complex of buildings. The seat of his entire plantation, which he called "Templeman's Crossroads," was dominated by a "wooden dwelling 28 by 18 feet." Like the Hague, this house had a "Dutch" or gambrel roof. Nearby were six domestic outbuildings, including a kitchen, a dairy, a laundry, two smokehouses, and a stable. Almost adjacent to the house and nearly as big was a wooden store that Templeman no doubt stocked with a range of goods--perhaps including textiles and tablewares--to attract potential customers on their way home. About 40 feet behind this store was a wood-framed and shedded lumber house where Templeman could deposit bulkier items that he offered for sale or had taken on trade.<sup>11</sup>

By 1813, the Hague had become the property of Philip Crabb, who leased two hundred acres of the tract "known as the Hague" to his relative Benedict Crabb. Most of their agreement involved the extent and intensity with which Benedict Crabb might cultivate the land, and it is possible that Philip Crabb kept for his own use the dwelling and its complex of buildings.<sup>12</sup> In 1815, Philip Crabb paid an additional tax for the dwelling because it was considered worth over \$500.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia Policy No. 513 for 1801 and Policy No. 467 for 1805, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>12</sup> Crabb to Crabb, 1 December 1813, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 13, pp. 6-7.

<sup>13</sup> A county tax assessor valued the Hague at \$700. It was one of only fifty-one dwellings in the county considered worth more than \$500. Westmoreland County Personal Property Tax Records,

The Hague and its commercial lot were first distinguished from the surrounding plantation in 1816, when Philip Crabb sold to John C. Peck of Bladensfield one acre of land "known by the name of the Hague" and located at the "fork of roads leading to Yeocomico and Coles Point necks." A few months later, Peck acquired 125 acres of the adjoining land, but in most subsequent transactions, the house site remained a distinct parcel.<sup>14</sup> Within two years of his purchase, Peck sold all 126 acres of the Hague to William Nelson, who probably undertook the dwelling's Federal-style retrimming. Nelson kept the property until he died in 1828.<sup>15</sup> The inventory that his executors made after his death is very detailed, and it suggests the way in which Nelson--and probably the Crabbs and the Hagues before him--lived and worked at the Hague.

William Nelson kept a store at the Hague, and when he died, its extensive stock was itemized in his probate inventory. He had available several hundred yards of fabric classified under headings such as "ginghams," and "cambricks." These were accompanied by shoes, hats, and many small accessories for grooming and dressing. Nelson also stocked cookware and tableware for every purpose, as well as hardware for household and plantation use. He had on hand an array of medicines and spices in addition to quantities of molasses, whiskey, and tar.<sup>16</sup> The contents of this diversely

1815, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>14</sup> Peck paid \$550 for the single acre at the crossroads and \$750 for the adjacent 125 acres of land. These figures suggest the significance of buildings and other improvements at the Hague. Crabb to Peck, 29 February 1816, Westmoreland Conty Deed/Will Book 23, pp. 183-184. Lyell to Peck, 21 June 1816, Westmoreland Conty Deed/Will Book 23, pp. 218-219.

<sup>15</sup> Peck to Nelson, 25 January 1818, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 23, pp. 403-404.

<sup>16</sup> Inventory of William Nelson Estate, 10 January 1829, Westmoreland County Account Book 14, pp. 266-279.

stocked store account for most of the inventory's considerable length, but "store goods" represented only about 13 percent of Nelson's personal wealth. Collectively, the most valuable component of Nelson's personal estate was his twenty-one slaves. These included Ann, a blacksmith in whom Nelson owned a half interest, and her presence suggests that the Hague attracted customers in need of a smithy as well as a store.<sup>17</sup> Among the remainder of Nelson's slaves were at least ten good workers.<sup>18</sup> Their principal task, in addition to tending Nelson's household, appears to have been cultivating substantial crops of grain on his plantation.<sup>19</sup>

William Nelson's success as manager of his farm, store, and blacksmith shop permitted him to live comfortably in the dwelling that survives at the Hague. After his death, the appraisers of his estate noted that Nelson used the larger of the two first-story rooms as a dining room. Among its contents were card tables, dining tables, chairs, flatware, and dishes. Across the passage, where stood two tea tables, a toilet table, and a half-dozen windsor chairs, Nelson had established his chamber. This smaller room contained two beds and other accoutrements for washing and dressing, but it was also furnished for use as a sitting room with a sofa, a rocking chair, and the other half-dozen windsor chairs. Above stairs,

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<sup>17</sup> Nelson's slaves were worth \$4325, or about 65 percent of his total personal estate. Nelson Inventory, p. 266.

<sup>18</sup> This number excludes the blacksmith, two elderly slaves who were assigned no value, and eight children under the age of thirteen. Nelson Inventory, p. 266.

<sup>19</sup> Because Nelson's estate included no tools such as those for carpentry or shoemaking, it appears that none of his other slaves were practicing artisans. At the time of his death, Nelson's "plantation utensils" included three yokes of oxen and 350 barrels of corn. The appraisers also noted numerous stacks of blade and top fodder, a parcel of shucks, piles of wheat and oat straw. Nelson Inventory, pp. 284-285.



Nelson's appraisers recorded that the "large room" and the "small room" were both furnished for sleeping. Between them was the "passage upstairs," where a pair of trunks were the only encumbrance. The appraisers next investigated a closet full of coarse household containers such as kegs, stoneware jugs, and pails. This storage room was probably located not within the house itself but at one end of a porch that has since disappeared. Stepping from this hypothetical porch into the nearest outbuilding, the executors found accoutrements for cooking, laundering, and other heavy household chores. For these, they began a fresh column with the heading "kitchen furniture."<sup>20</sup>

After William Nelson's estate was settled, his sons kept the Hague for about thirteen years. In 1843, they sold both the lot and the adjoining tract to David Tapscott for \$3000.<sup>21</sup> The property had changed hands four times more by 1851, when R. L. T. Beale, acting as Catherine V. Daiger's trustee, paid taxes on 126 acres "at the Hague."<sup>22</sup> Although the tract eventually dwindled in size, the Daigers were able to keep the dwelling site and six surrounding acres until near the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup> In 1899 E. C. Griffith bought the Hague for \$2000. Notations in several deeds suggest that the dwelling shared its site with a store at least

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<sup>20</sup> Nelson Inventory, pp. 279-284.

<sup>21</sup> Nelson to Tapscott, 1843, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 32, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1851, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia. The sequence of transactions between 1843 and 1868 is outlined in a 1868 deed of trust for the property. Joseph and Catherine V. Daiger and Richard L. S. Beale to Robert M. Mayo, 25 August 1868, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 37, p. 608.

<sup>23</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1851-1899, Westmoreland County Office of Clerk of Circuit Court, Montross, Virginia.

through Griffith's ownership.<sup>24</sup> His descendants 1993, when John F. Clark bought the house and its surrounding few acres.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Claybrook to Griffith, 29 September 1899, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 57, p. 118. The property was described in 1909 as including "all buildings thereon including the store house formerly occupied by the firm of Griffith & Co." R. C. Mayo to J. R. Dos Passos, 7 September 1909, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 69, p. 58.

<sup>25</sup>Letter of John F. Clark IV to Camille Wells, 3 January 1994.



The Hague, Westmoreland County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)

## KIRNAN

### WESTMORELAND COUNTY

#### KINSALE 7.5

Kirnan is the sort of house that historians of Virginia architecture once called a "cottage," implying that it was built by some colonial "yeoman" of ordinary means.<sup>1</sup> It is clear that the planter who built Kirnan did not have the same interest in architectural fashion that influenced the construction of such recognizably neoclassical houses as nearby Peckatone. Nevertheless, Kirnan is the carefully planned, well built, and expertly finished result of an expensive building campaign that few eighteenth-century Virginians could afford. During the 1780s, Kirnan was the plantation seat of a couple whose combined landholdings amounted to 1250 acres. This placed their household among the twenty richest in all of Westmoreland County.<sup>2</sup>

Kirnan is a wood-framed and weatherboarded house built to one and a half stories with a gable roof that originally had clipped ends. The house faces north. Set on a low English-bond brick foundation above a full cellar, Kirnan has a central-passage plan with two rooms on each side. There is a passage and two additional rooms in the half-story above stairs. Exterior to each gable-end wall is a chimney made of Flemish-bond brickwork with a regular patterns of

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, The Virginia Landmarks Register (Richmond: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 1976), pp. 19 and 33.

<sup>2</sup> In 1782, there were a total of 771 households in Westmoreland County. Of this number, only 394 owned any land at all. With 1250 acres, Kirnan's owner in 1782 ranked among the top 3 percent--actually 2.5 percent--in the entire county. Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

glazed headers up to the level of the stacks.<sup>3</sup>

Despite their similarities in design, Kirnan's chimneys are sometimes thought to represent different periods of construction because the east chimney is significantly wider than that on the west gable end. While it would not be unlikely that an eighteenth-century house of Kirnan's size was built in two or more stages, Kirnan itself has no seam in the foundation and no punctuation in the roof structure that would accompany such a sequence of construction. It thus appears that Kirnan was originally planned to enclose two rooms on the east side of the passage and one large room on the west side. The four-bay elevation is one clue that such an arrangement was originally intended. Another is the surviving eighteenth-century woodwork in the northwest room. A handsome paneled overmantel would once have been centered on the west wall of a room that was later partitioned to create two small unheated rooms in the southwest quadrant of the main story.

This dwelling retains much of its original eighteenth-century interior finish, but like every other surviving house on the Northern Neck, Kirnan was given Federal-style retrimming during the early nineteenth century. Closer to mid-century, a one-room kitchen was built behind the house. Still later in the nineteenth century, this kitchen was connected by means of a hyphen to the main dwelling.<sup>4</sup> It was probably at the turn of the century that a room with a fanlighted doorway and other colonial-revival trim was added to Kirnan's facade. To those who inhabited the house, this room

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<sup>3</sup> Each chimney has a three-course water table, and below this level, the brickwork matches the English bond of the dwelling's foundation.

<sup>4</sup> The standing kitchen probably dates from the first years after Walter Bowie acquired Kirnan from the Campbell heirs. Italianate trim around the windows and doors of the hyphen suggest that it was added during the 1870s or 1880s.

combined the functions of an enclosed front porch with those of a well-ventilated passage sufficiently broad to accommodate comfortable arrangements of seating. As long as anyone can remember, this space has been used as an informal sitting room.<sup>5</sup>

Kirnan was built on a level site and oriented toward the road that connects Sandy Point Neck with more inland parts of Westmoreland County. Behind the house, the terrain falls away gradually toward a branch of Bonum Creek. Like the Hague, which is located a few miles to the northwest, Kirnan was built within a patent of two thousand acres that Richard Lee acquired in 1658.<sup>6</sup> In 1775, the executors of Archibald Campbell's estate purchased the dwelling site and several hundred acres as one of the plantations Campbell had directed them to obtain for the use of his widow and younger sons.<sup>7</sup> The house was apparently standing by 1777, when the Virginia Gazette mentioned "Kirnan, the seat of Mrs. Campbell" in

<sup>5</sup> Interview with John Morrow, Jr. and Genevieve Morrow, 15 July 1988.

<sup>6</sup> David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), p. 72.

<sup>7</sup> Archibald Campbell was minister of Washington Parish in Westmoreland County and he apparently made his home on one of the two parish glebes. Otto Lohrenz, "Clergyman and Gentleman: Archibald Campbell of Westmoreland County, 1741-1774," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 39 (December 1989), pp. 4432-4455. In his will, Campbell directs his executors to "recover and receive from Mr. John Berryman the money principal and interest due from him to me, . . . [and] invest the same in a purchase of lands in fee simple for my two sons." Campbell then devised to his wife Hannah Campbell, "one third part of the land to be purchased as before mentioned with the money due from Mr. John Berryman to be allotted to her at the discretion of my executors." The negotiations that no doubt occurred in the allocation of this land have not been explored. Will of Archibald Campbell, 25 April 1775, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 22, pp. 385-387. Carolyn H. Jett kindly supplied this reference.

reporting the death of her sister, Katharine McKay.<sup>8</sup> In 1781, the widow Hannah Campbell agreed to marry Richard Hipkins, and it was their joint Westmoreland County landownership that exceeded twelve hundred acres in 1782.<sup>9</sup> Within five years, Hannah Campbell Hipkins was again a widow, and in 1787, the tax commissioner for Cople Parish recorded that she owned thirty-one slaves, seven horses, and thirty-six head of cattle.<sup>10</sup>

Mrs. Hipkins died in 1796 or 1797, and although the sequence of events is not entirely clear, it appears that her heirs or executors sold Kirnan to George Fairfax Lee of nearby Mount Pleasant.<sup>11</sup> Lee, in turn, conveyed the property to George Garner, who had first gained land and social position in Westmoreland County during the 1780s.<sup>12</sup> To acquire the Kirnan tract of 240 acres, Garner paid Lee £2000, a hefty price that indicates the value of the plantation's standing house and outbuildings.<sup>13</sup> In 1801, George Garner protected his investment in the buildings at Kirnan with the

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<sup>8</sup> Virginia Gazette (Purdie) 24 January 1777.

<sup>9</sup> George Harrison Sanford King, editor, Marriages of Richmond County, Virginia 1668-1853 (Fredericksburg: 1964), p. 32.

<sup>10</sup> Westmoreland County Personal Property Tax Records, 1787, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>11</sup> Lohrenz, "Clergyman and Gentleman," p. 4451.

<sup>12</sup> In 1784, Garner acquired his first tract of land in Westmoreland County. By the end of the century, he owned about seven hundred acres in the county. Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1784-1800, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia. In 1785 George Garner was chosen, along with his neighbors George Turberville of Peckatone and John Rochester of the Rochester house to serve on the vestry of Cople Parish Church. William Meade, Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1857), v. 2, p. 153.

<sup>13</sup> Lee to Garner, 6 June 1797, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 21, pp. 56-57. Lee indicated that Kirnan was in 1797 "at present in the occupation of the said George Garner."

purchase of an insurance policy to cover the possibility of their loss by fire. In this policy, Garner indicated that Kirnan was his dwelling plantation, but he declined to assign it a name.<sup>14</sup> The dwelling itself was described as "a wooden dwelling house 42 feet long by 26 feet wide one story high, underpinned with brick footing going, therefore, off[f] the ground."<sup>15</sup> Garner and two of his neighbors agreed that the house, kitchen, barn, and smokehouse he wished to insure would cost collectively \$1900 to reconstruct.<sup>16</sup>

By 1809, George Garner had died and his widow was assigned the house and two hundred acres as her dower right.<sup>17</sup> Ann Garner lived on at the plantation until her own death in 1820. In her will, she gave "to William Wright, son of William Wright, the tract of land whereon I now live with all its appurtenances." Her inventory, neatly categorized after her own direction into bequests to various relatives, offers little information about how the Garners had furnished Kirnan as their home.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Apparently, George Garner did not identify his plantation as Kirnan because he intended to rename it.

<sup>15</sup> The dimensions of the house Garner insured are those of Kirnan's perimeter. Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia Policy No. 518, 24 October 1801, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>16</sup> The other insured structures were a kitchen that measured 24 by 14 feet, a barn that measured 32 by 20 feet, and a smokehouse that measured 14 by 12 feet. All of these buildings were wooden, one story in height, and undistinguished by brick foundations. Mutual Assurance Society Policy No. 518.

<sup>17</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1807-1813, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>18</sup> Will of Ann Garner, 22 May 1820, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 24, pp.68-69. Ann Garner's inventory does include mention of "7 window curtains" and "3 pare of hand Irons." Inventory of Ann Garner Estate, 1 June 1821, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 12, pp. 17-20.



Members of the Wright family continued to own Kirnan until 1827, when James C. Wright sold the property to John Campbell, the son of Archibald and Hannah Campbell.<sup>19</sup> By the date of this transaction, John Campbell owned over four thousand acres of land in Westmoreland County, and he was ensconced at a plantation he called "Campbellton" in Washington Parish. The purchase of Kirnan was no doubt a bit of good business, but it also returned to Campbell's family possession the dwelling house that had been built for his mother and named, as a mid-nineteenth-century Campbell descendant explained, "after a family seat in Argyleshire, Scotland."<sup>20</sup>

John Campbell died less than a year after his purchase. The perfunctory character of his will and the complicating death of his only son threw the division of Campbell's property into the lap of the county court.<sup>21</sup> A court-appointed surveyor assigned to Campbell's widow as her dower two of her husband's plantations, including Kirnan, renamed "China Hall," which was "the place at which she has

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<sup>19</sup> The sequence of Wright family ownership is outlined in Wright to Campbell, 1 January 1827, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 25, pp. 369-370. John Campbell's relationship to the Rev. Archibald Campbell is confirmed in Meade, Old Churches, v. 2, pp. 160-161. James C. Wright had decided to settle on his wife's plantation in Northumberland County, where stood the dwelling now known as the Claughton house. For illustrations and brief discussions of this house, see Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Meade, Old Churches, v. 2, p. 161. While the Old World origin of names for early Virginia plantations is often apocryphal, Kirnan's case has a possibly documentable basis. The wills of both Archibald and John Campbell mention family property in Scotland. Archibald Campbell Will, pp. 385-387; John Campbell Will, 25 February 1828, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 26, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> John Campbell Will, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 26, p. 6.

resided ever since the death of Mr. Campbell."<sup>22</sup>

Elizabeth Campbell remained at Kirnan until she died in 1839. The neighbors who agreed to appraise her personal estate identified one of the front two rooms as "the parler," furnished as a formal sitting room with a "sopha," two cane-bottom settees, and a dozen other cane-bottom chairs. The other north room was used as a dining room with sets of dining tables and tea tables as well as a china press, sideboard, and safe where Mrs. Campbell kept her substantial assemblage of china and silver.<sup>23</sup> Upon leaving the dining room, the appraisers abandoned their strategy of naming rooms, but the interspersing of beds with wash stands and hearth tools suggests that the other heated room on the main floor was Mrs. Campbell's chamber. At least one of the southwest rooms and one of the rooms above stairs were also furnished for dressing and sleeping.<sup>24</sup>

In the year following Elizabeth Campbell's death, her five daughters sold "the estate called Kirnan" to Walter Bowie for \$2500.<sup>25</sup> Bowie lived until 1853, and during that time he apparently came to identify strongly with the house and its

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<sup>22</sup> John Campbell Estate Settlement, 26 January 1835, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 28, pp. 280-288. George Garner apparently renamed the plantation after 1801. From the 1820s until after 1850, Kirnan was called "China Hall." Westmoreland County Land Tax Records 1815-1850, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Campbell's silver was worth \$283.70, about a third of the value of all her household furnishings. Inventory of Elizabeth Campbell Estate, 12 June 1839, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 19, pp. 20-22.

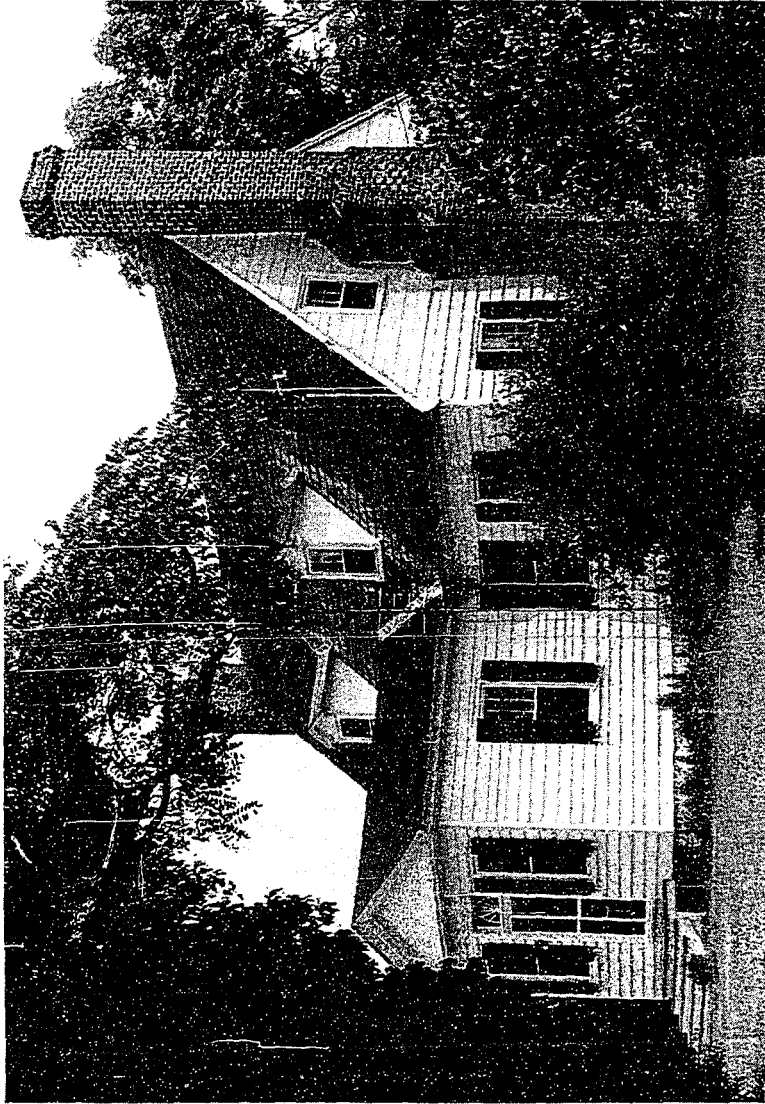
<sup>24</sup> Campbell Inventory, pp. 20-22.

<sup>25</sup> Campbell to Bowie, 19 November 1840, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 30, p. 322; Mayo and Leland to Bowie, 15 November 1840, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 31, p. 12.

surrounding plantation. His gravestone, which survives in a cemetery near Coles Point, records that Bowie "departed this life at Kirnan his residence" in 1853. As things have turned out, his notion of the house as a permanent family home was not misplaced: Bowie's descendants have lived at Kirnan ever since.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The property descended first to Edwin Bowie, then to Walter Bowie Taylor, and then to Genevieve Taylor, who lives at Kirnan with her husband John Morrow, Jr. Morrow Interview, 15 July 1988.



Kirnan, Westmoreland County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)

MONROE HOUSE  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
COLONIAL BEACH SOUTH 7.5

In 1650 mariner Andrew Monroe patented his first two hundred acres of land in Westmoreland County. This choice tract of low and level ground bordered a protected cove near the place where two creeks flow into the Potomac River.<sup>1</sup> In time, one of these streams came to be called "Monroe Creek." When Monroe died in 1668, he had over a thousand acres to distribute among his heirs. By the middle of the eighteenth century, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren had settled themselves on parcels of this legacy all along the length of Monroe Creek. One of these descendants was Spence Monroe.<sup>2</sup>

As a youth, Spence Monroe was apprenticed to a joiner who promised to teach Monroe how to make furniture, how to prepare and install architectural trim, and perhaps how to perform some heavier sorts of carpentry as well. Monroe thus prepared himself to augment his income as a landowning planter with work in a valued and lucrative trade.<sup>3</sup> By 1752, Monroe was ready to take charge of his own affairs. He made what any skilled woodworker would regard as a useful marriage with Elizabeth Jones, the daughter of James Jones, an "undertaker in architecture" in King George County.<sup>4</sup> He

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<sup>1</sup> David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond, Dietz Press, 1942), p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, pp. 46 and 62. Spence Monroe's ancestry is outlined in "James Monroe," William and Mary Quarterly 1st Series, 4 (April 1896), pp. 272-275.

<sup>3</sup> Reference to Spence Monroe's apprenticeship is made in Keith Egloff and Martha McCartney, "Excavations at the James Monroe Birthplace," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 31 (December 1981), pp. 3483-3496.

also apparently built a new house on his inherited Westmoreland County plantation and set about making his living as a joiner and cabinetmaker.<sup>5</sup> He and his wife also raised a family--a daughter and four sons who included James Monroe, the fifth president of the United States.<sup>6</sup> When he died in 1774, Spence Monroe's assets included the plantation of several hundred acres, an active joinery trade, and a personal estate valued at about £700.<sup>7</sup>

Although Spence Monroe was more affluent than most of his neighbors, his inventory confirms that he spent little on domestic comforts. About two thirds of Monroe's personal wealth was represented by his eleven slaves, and livestock accounted for another 20 percent of his total worth. Once his £20 in planting, woodworking, and blacksmithing tools had been valued, it became a matter of public record that Spence Monroe's household was stocked with furniture, linens, ceramics, and various other domestic accoutrements that were collectively worth under £100.<sup>8</sup>

According to the terms of his will, Monroe's real estate was to be divided between James and Spence, the older two of his sons. Within six years, however, the Monroes's Westmoreland County

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<sup>4</sup>"Letters of James Monroe," Tyler's Quarterly 4 (October 1922), p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> In a 1764 agreement with Francis Gray, Spence Monroe referred to himself as a "cabinetmaker." Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 14, p. 298. In the following year, James Walker, the son of Major William Walker of King George County, bound himself to Monroe "to learn the trade of a joiner." "James Monroe," pp. 273-274.

<sup>6</sup> Egloff and McCartney, "Excavations at Monroe Birthplace," p. 3484.

<sup>7</sup> Inventory of Spence Monroe Estate, 29 November 1774, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 5, pp. 285-286. Monroe's personal estate included components of several unfinished chairs.

<sup>8</sup> Monroe Inventory, pp. 285-286.

household had broken up, the younger Spence had disappeared, and James Monroe decided to sell the family plantation.<sup>9</sup> In December of 1780 he announced his intention in the Virginia Gazette, where he described the plantation as five hundred acres of level and fertile land with some rich marshes, valuable timber, and an "excellent orchard" of apple and peach trees. Monroe also mentioned the buildings, including "a dwelling house with a passage and several rooms below and above, with a kitchen, barn, stables, and other necessary houses."<sup>10</sup>

Nothing about this terse description distinguishes the Monroe house from the sort of dwelling that substantial Virginia planters built throughout the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, because this house came to be known as the birthplace of the nation's fifth president, it has received exceptional scrutiny. An antebellum engraving indicates that the Monroe house was a three-bay wood-framed and wood-sided structure with a gable roof, two brick chimneys, and a hipped-roof addition built onto one end.<sup>11</sup> Excavation of the site during the bicentennial celebration of the 1970s revealed still more about the dwelling. The entire house measured about 58 by 18 feet and it originally faced north toward a meandering branch of Monroe Creek. The three-bay structure was built over a solid brick foundation that included a one-room brick-lined cellar. The gable-end shed addition was, as it appears in the nineteenth-century engraving, set on brick piers.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Will of Spence Monroe, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 16, p. 128. The apparent scattering of the Monroe heirs and the disappearance of the younger Spence Monroe are described in Egloff and McCartney, "Excavations at Monroe Birthplace," p. 3485.

<sup>10</sup> Virginia Gazette (Richmond), 30 December 1780.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Sears, Pictorial History of the American Revolution (New York: R. Sears, 1845).

<sup>12</sup> Egloff and McCartney, "Excavations at Monroe Birthplace," pp. 3487-3488.

Artifacts found at the Monroe house site indicate that the dwelling was built in the middle of the eighteenth century--at about the same time Spence Monroe married. Owners and tenants abandoned the house around 1850, and most of the reusable building materials, including bricks from the chimneys and foundations, were removed from the site. Without information available in the distinct joints and patterns of this masonry, firm conclusions about the architectural development of the Monroe house are difficult, although the dateable artifacts may suggest that Spence Monroe built his house in stages. Beginning with a dwelling that had a one- or two-room plan, Monroe appears to have expanded it, within a few years, to enclose a central passage and two flanking rooms on the main floor.<sup>13</sup> James Monroe's newspaper description indicates the presence of two or three more rooms above stairs, but these loft rooms were originally unheated, for Spence Monroe's inventory includes only two sets of hearth tools.<sup>14</sup>

Several months after James Monroe advertised his Westmoreland County plantation for sale, Gawin Corbin of Caroline County arranged to buy it, initiating the property's half-century of status as a quarter or tenement. By 1787 Corbin had settled on the tract ten slaves, four horses, and twenty-six head of cattle.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Egloff and McCartney, "Excavations at Monroe Birthplace," pp. 3487-3488. The date sequence of artifacts recovered from the two ends of the Monroe house looks far from conclusive, and remains of the square-plan cellar under the eastern third of the house may have excessively influenced the inference that the house was built in two campaigns. It is entirely possible that Spence Monroe built his central-passage dwelling all at one time with a square cellar under only the east room.

<sup>14</sup> Virginia Gazette (Richmond), 30 December 1780; Monroe Inventory, pp. 285-286.

<sup>15</sup> Monroe to Corbin, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 16, pp. 388-391; Westmoreland County Personal Property Tax List,



Twelve years later he sold the dwelling and its plantation to Henry Lee who shortly thereafter conveyed it to Isaac Pollack of Washington, D. C.<sup>16</sup> Pollack rented the plantation to tenants for several years and then sold it to John Vanness.<sup>17</sup> Sometime amidst all of these transactions, a tenant or manager apparently constructed the small two-room addition to the west gable end of the Monroe house.<sup>18</sup> It was in place during Vanness's ownership, when the dwelling first gained attention as the "Monroe Birthplace." Despite this recognition, the house was systematically dismantled not long after Vanness's death in 1849.<sup>19</sup>

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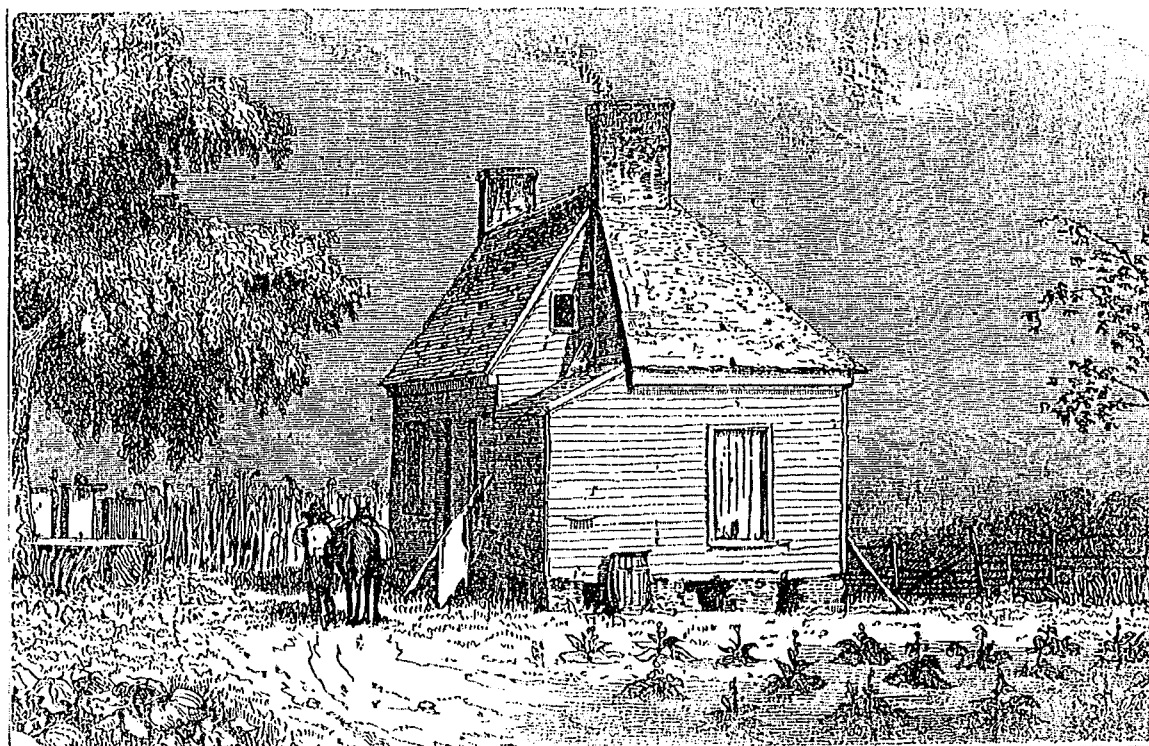
1787, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia. With his total 4918 acres of land distributed among Caroline, Spotsylvania, and Westmoreland Counties, Gawin Corbin ranked in 1785 among the hundred richest planters in Virginia. Jackson Turner Main, "The One Hundred," William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series, 11 (July 1954), p. 374.

<sup>16</sup> Corbin to Lee, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 20, pp. 37-39; Lee to Pollack Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 20, pp. 72-74.

<sup>17</sup> Pollack to Vanness, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 25, pp. 416-421.

<sup>18</sup> This small addition measured about 18 by 13 feet. The southwest room had a fireplace that was built in such a way as to share the flue of the existing chimney. The differing rooflines visible in the antebellum print suggest that this addition may have been built in two sections.

<sup>19</sup> Will of John Vanness, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 32, pp. 428-442.



Monroe House, Westmoreland County, Virginia, about 1840. From Robert Sears, The Pictorial History of the American Revolution (New York: Robert Sears, 1847), p. 214.

PECKATONE  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
KINSALE 7.5

As the story goes, Peckatone met its end when Horace Kirkwood, who bought and began renovating the property in 1885, realized that he could not sustain his mortgage. On October 21, 1886, he set the house afire in the hopes of recovering its value in insurance. No one in Westmoreland County ever saw him again.<sup>1</sup> The only known photographs of Peckatone, taken at the turn of the century, show the south and east elevations of the burnt-out shell. A description of the structure, apparently published with an account of the fire, offers but little additional information:

Peckatone house was a spacious and massive quadrangular building of English bricks with immense halls and wainscotted rooms. A wide platform, reached by broad flights of stone steps, in front and rear, supplied the place of porches, and offered a pleasing view of far extending lawn and fields on the one side, and on the other of the river. A wall extended from one corner of the main building to a brick kitchen and servants' rooms; and on the opposite side, but more distant stood the spacious brick stable. Enclosed grounds had shade trees, lawns and graveled walks. There was a profusion of fruits and flowers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Related in Elizabeth H. Dos Passos, "Peckatone Then and Now," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 23 (December 1973), p. 2433; Thomas Tileston Waterman was specific about the date in his Mansions of Virginia, 1706-1776 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1945), p. 192. Kirkwood did purchase the property from John and Bettie Lynham in 1885. Lynham to Kirkwood, 16 July 1885, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book, 46, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. G.W. Beale, The Baltimorean (December 1886), quoted in Dos Passos, "Peckatone," p. 2427.

It is said that during the 1930s, bricks from the ruined house were used in the extensive restorations at Stratford. When Maurice A. Thorne acquired Peckatone in 1938, only the foundations, which measured about 90 by 40 feet, were still perceptible. Since that time, the site of the house itself has washed into the Potomac River.<sup>3</sup>

The surviving two photographs of Peckatone record that the house was an imposing two-story brick structure. The bond of the brickwork is not clear, but there was a molded brick water table and no regular pattern of glazed headers.<sup>4</sup> The brick walls were devoid of any seam or break of the sort that would signal two or more stages of construction. Peckatone's south elevation was seven bays long. While it appears that each door and window was surmounted by a stone flat arch with a carved keystone, it is also possible that the keystones were flanked by gauged bricks that, like the foundation of the dwelling itself, had been painted white.<sup>5</sup> The uniform height of the brick walls on both the fronts and sides of

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<sup>3</sup> Mary Lamar Gordon and Louis and Grace Dos Passos to Maurice Thorne, 1 December 1938, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 96, p. 466; interview with Maurice A. Thorne, 19 June 1989.

<sup>4</sup> An outbuilding known as the Peckatone kitchen had walls of Flemish-bond brickwork. This two-story three-bay structure was 50 feet long and 20 feet wide. Only its foundation survives today, but Waterman published a photograph of the kitchen taken by Frances Benjamin Johnston at the turn of the century. Waterman asserted that this dependency stood "at right angles to the mansion" and on the east side of the house. Waterman, Mansions of Virginia, pp. 192-195.

<sup>5</sup> During the nineteenth century the foundation and belt course of Westover in Charles City County were also painted white. Pictured in A. Lawrence Kocher and Howard Dearstyne, Shadows in Silver: Virginia 1850-1900 People, Plantations, Towns, and Cities (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), p. 73.

Peckatone indicates that the house had a hipped roof. A line established by a change in brick color or texture on the two interior chimney stacks suggests that the pitch of the roof was moderate--well below 45 degrees.

The photographs of Peckatone permit only a few inferences about the way space was partitioned within the house. A regular series of openings in the foundation indicates the presence of a full cellar. The placement of the chimneys, as well as the depth of the structure itself, confirms that the house was two rooms deep. On both the first and second story, each of the four principal rooms was organized so that the fireplace and windows were on opposite walls. The ghost of a gable-roofed addition on the dwelling's northeast corner suggests that at one time both the first and the second stories were accessible to the detached kitchen by way of an enclosed hyphen. Most surviving Virginia houses with seven-bay elevations had central passages that were three bays wide. These broad passages were often bisected across their length so that they might serve as living as well as circulation space.<sup>6</sup> A partition wall, barely perceptible behind two of the window openings, suggests that Peckatone had such a liveable central space behind by the central three bays of the south elevation.

The site of this imposing house was part of nine hundred acres patented by Nicholas Jernew in 1650.<sup>7</sup> It may also have been

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<sup>6</sup> Mark R. Wenger, "The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Space," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture II, Camille Wells, editor, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), pp. 137-149.

<sup>7</sup>David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), p. 71; Stephen R. Potter, "An Ethnohistorical Examination of Indian Groups in Northumberland County, Virginia, 1608-1719," (M. A. Thesis: University of North Carolina, 1976), p. 72.

encompassed in a parcel of land Westmoreland County magistrates surveyed in 1656 as a reserve for the Machotic werowance Peckatone and his people. If this is the case, the Indians's tenure was brief. During the 1660s Henry Corbin assembled, through purchases and patents, over a thousand acres of land along the Potomac River in eastern Westmoreland County. This tract included the riverside site of Peckatone.<sup>8</sup> That Corbin dwelt on his property is confirmed by the agreement he and his three contiguous neighbors made in 1670 to construct a "house . . . for the continuance of good neighborhood" on some site of mutual convenience. The four planters promised to take turns hosting entertainments for themselves and their kin in connection with the annual processioning of their mutual plantation boundaries.<sup>9</sup> This exceptional structure was indeed built and put to use, for in 1744, Thomas Lee of Stratford testified in the county court "that there was a banquetting house erected in Pickatowns Field by Henry Corbin, Esqr., Capt. John Lee, Thomas Gerard, Esqr., and Mr. Isaac Allerton."<sup>10</sup>

The tract Thomas Lee had called "Pickatowns" became the dwelling plantation of his daughter Hannah Lee in 1748, when she married Gawin Corbin, a grandson of the original patentee.<sup>11</sup> The site had attained the modern version of its name by 1760, when Hannah Lee Corbin helped to inventory the estate of her deceased husband, "Gawen Corbin Esqr. at Peckatone in Westmoreland County."<sup>12</sup> In his will, Corbin left Peckatone in equal parts to

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<sup>8</sup> Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p. 55.

<sup>9</sup> Agreement of Henry Corbin, Thomas Gerrard, John Lee, and Isaac Allerton, 3 March 1670, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 9, p. 344.

<sup>10</sup> Confirmation of Thomas Lee, 27 March 1744, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 24, p. 182.

<sup>11</sup> Rees Watkins, "Hannah Lee Corbin Hall--A Baptist," The Virginia Baptist Register No. 28 (1989), p. 1445.

Hannah Lee Corbin and to Martha Corbin, the only surviving child of their marriage.<sup>13</sup>

Hannah Corbin remained at Peckatone and continued to manage the plantation for about ten years after her husband's death. Probably because Gawin Corbin's will stipulated that she might keep her half interest in Peckatone only while she remained a widow, Hannah Lee Corbin never officially married Dr. Richard Lingan Hall, the man who kept her company at Peckatone during much of that time.<sup>14</sup> By 1772 Hall and Corbin were living with their two young children in Richmond County, leaving Peckatone to Martha Corbin and her husband George Turberville.<sup>15</sup>

Like many early houses on Virginia's Northern Neck, Peckatone is thought to have been built during the lifetime of the land's seventeenth-century grantee. Evidence suggests, however, that the brick house remembered as Peckatone was in reality built during the tenure of the Turbervilles. In 1760, when Hannah Corbin and her

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<sup>12</sup> Inventory of Gawin Corbin Estate, 10 April 1760, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 4, pp. 111-112.

<sup>12</sup> Will of Gawin Corbin, 29 February 1760, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 13, pp. 265-266.

<sup>14</sup> It is possible that Hannah Corbin and Richard Hall, who became Baptists during the 1760s, were married by a dissenting minister. Corbin referred to one of her two children with Hall as "my Baptist daughter." Watkins, "Hannah Lee Corbin Hall," pp. 1446-1449; Louis Belote Dawe and Sandra Gioia Treadway, "Hannah Lee Corbin, The Forgotten Lee," Virginia Cavalcade 29 (Autumn, 1979), pp. 70-77.

<sup>15</sup> The couple had moved to Richmond County by March 26, 1772, when Hall recorded a gift of some slaves to their young daughter. Richmond County Deed Book. Hall and Corbin used several deeds of gift to settle property on their two children, who were not considered legal heirs of their parents's wealth. These transactions are cited in Dawe and Treadway, "Hannah Lee Corbin," pp. 74-75. Martha Corbin and George Turberville were married in June of 1769.

brother Richard Henry Lee took their room-by-room inventory of Gawin Corbin's household goods, they referred to one first-floor room as "the old chamber," implying that the Peckatone house of their day had been built in at least two campaigns.<sup>16</sup> When the inventoried rooms on the main floor are lined up with their corresponding rooms on the floor above, it is possible to guess which spaces were added--and why.

passage	passage upstairs
dining room [hearth tools]	room over dining room [hearth tools]
nursery [fireplace implied]	room over nursery [hearth tools]
old chamber	room over old chamber
parlor [hearth tools]	chamber upstairs [hearth tools]

Apparently, the mansion house of Gawin and Hannah Lee Corbin once had a three-room plan that included, on the first floor, a dining room, a chamber, and a nursery. At some date, this configuration of rooms and functions proved inadequate. The Corbins then added to the house a one-room wing.<sup>17</sup> This gave the household a parlor, where Hannah and Gawin Corbin arranged their best furniture.<sup>18</sup> The room above the parlor was, unlike the dwelling's former chamber, equipped with the significant comfort of a fireplace. So, furnished with a chest, a trunk, a table, and an easy chair in addition

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<sup>16</sup> Corbin Inventory, pp. 111-112.

<sup>17</sup> Since this earlier Peckatone does not survive, it is impossible to know when it was built or enlarged. The reference here to the Corbins as the builders and remodelers of this vanished house is based only on the fact that Peckatone had been a Corbin plantation since the 1660s.

<sup>18</sup> Gawin Corbin's estate was not appraised and so it is impossible to know the total value of any room's contents. The parlor, however, contained the dwelling's only furniture made of mahogany, the most costly of imported woods. Corbin Inventory, p. 111.



to a bed, two bedsteads, and the household's best textiles, it became Hannah and Gawin Corbin's new "chamber upstairs."<sup>19</sup>

There is still other evidence that the Peckatone known from turn-of-the-century photographs was built by George and Martha Corbin Turberville rather than by an earlier generation of the Corbin family. Of the four rooms on the first floor of Gawin Corbin's dwelling, only two--the dining room and the parlor--were equipped with tools for a hearth. By contrast, the Peckatone house that George Turberville left behind at his death in 1793 had eight sets of hearth tools distributed among four rooms on the main floor and five rooms above.<sup>20</sup>

Opening off the Turberville's "passage downstairs" at Peckatone were three entertaining rooms: a dining room, a drawing room, and a parlor. Both the dining and the drawing rooms had closets with storage shelves to accommodate their contents of useful and luxurious household goods. At least one of these closets also may have provided access to the hyphen, represented in the inventory as the "thoroughfare and two closets," and the outbuildings beyond. The fourth room on the main floor at Peckatone was called "the green room," and it was furnished for sleeping. Like the other three rooms on the first floor at Peckatone, the green room had a fireplace.

The "passage upstairs" apparently opened onto five rooms. There was "Miss Hannah's room," a red room, a blue room, and the chamber. Each of these spaces was furnished as a bedroom and each one contained tools for a hearth. The blue room also had a small closet. Another closet called "the closet over the porch" was probably situated at the end of the passage and was actually a storage room of considerable size.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Corbin Inventory, p. 111.

<sup>20</sup> Inventory of George Turberville, 19 April 1793, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 7, pp. 135-143.

<sup>21</sup> Turberville Inventory, pp. 135-143.

By the time George Turberville died at Peckatone in 1793, he had already conveyed to his son Gawin Corbin Turberville "all the lands which came into my family from his grandfather the late Gawin Corbin Esquires estate."<sup>22</sup> Shortly after his death Turberville's house was ranked in a uniquely thorough evaluation of Virginia personal property as among the ten most valuable houses in Westmoreland County.<sup>23</sup> Upon the death of Gawin Turberville in 1814 Peckatone descended to his daughter, Mary Willis Turberville, and her husband William Taliaferro.<sup>24</sup> When Taliaferro died in 1836, he directed that the family's estate be divided among all of his children, who were still minors at the time.<sup>25</sup> In 1845 following the death of Mary Turberville Taliaferro, Peckatone was surveyed and partitioned. Gawin Corbin Taliaferro received "ninety acres, with the mansion house and curtilage, together with thirty acres of woodland." He and his wife subsequently sold their portion to his sister, Martha Taliaferro, and her husband George Brown.<sup>26</sup> During the 1860s, the Browns sold the Peckatone dwelling house tract out of the family. It changed hands twice more before Horace B. Kirkwood purchased the property on July 16, 1885.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Will of George Turberville, 29 January 1793, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 18, pp. 278-283.

<sup>23</sup> Westmoreland County Personal Property Tax Records, 1815, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

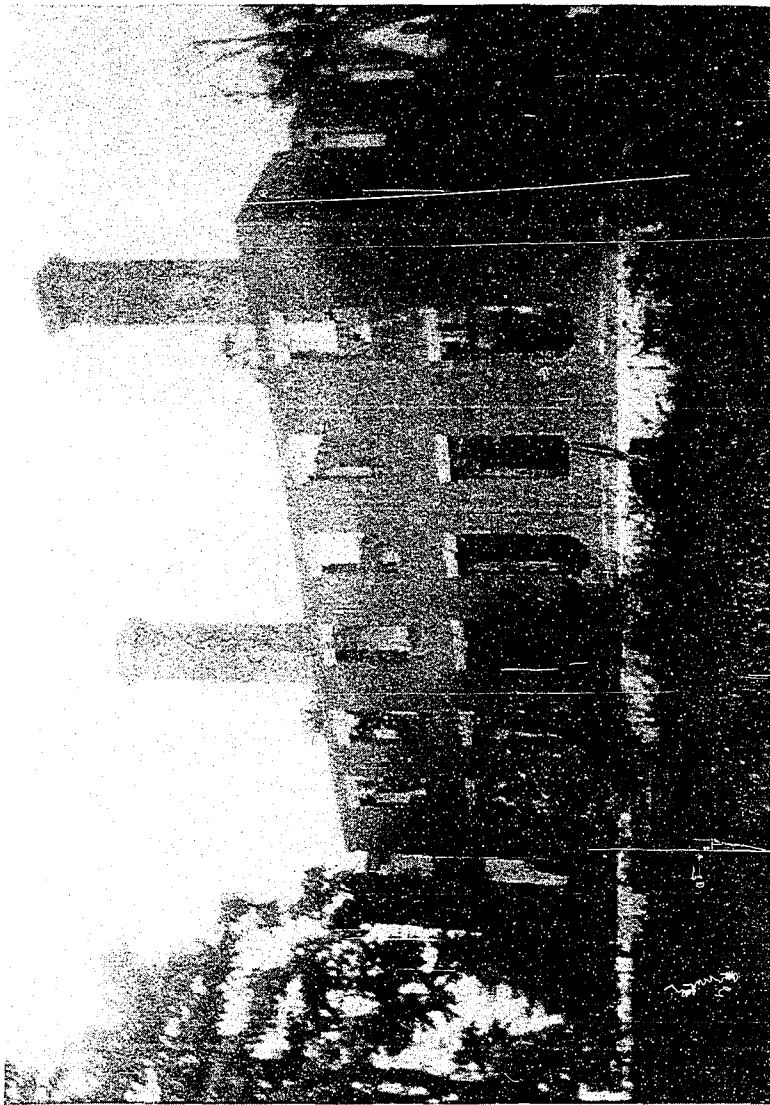
<sup>24</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1836, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia..

<sup>25</sup> Will of William F. Taliaferro, 23 May 1836, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 29, p. 78.

<sup>26</sup> Taliaferro to Brown, 24 February 1857, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 35, p. 350. Reference is made in this deed to the 1845 partition by which Gawin Corbin Taliaferro and his wife Emma Taliaferro sold their portion of Peckatone to George Brown. Elizabeth H. Dos Passos wrote that George Brown had married Taliaferro's sister Martha. Dos Passos, "Peckatone," p. 2432.

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<sup>27</sup> The deed by which Kirkwood acquired Peckatone indicates that the property had been owned in the intervening years by two generations of the Hardwick family. Lynham to Kirkwood, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 46, p. 4.



Peckatone, Westmoreland County, Virginia, about 1900. (Collection of Maurice A. Thorne.)

POPES CREEK  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
COLONIAL BEACH SOUTH 7.5

The eighteenth-century house at Popes Creek was sited on a point of land near the mouth of the creek, which is sheltered from the waters of the Potomac River by numerous marshy islands. The house faced north toward these islands and the river beyond. Since the nineteenth century, the site of the Popes Creek house has been called "Burnt House Point," a reference to the dwelling's destruction in 1779 or 1780. The remains of the house were discovered and excavated during the 1930s.

Burnt House Point was part of a thousand-acre tract that Henry Brooks patented in 1655 and subsequently distributed in small parcels to various relatives and descendants.<sup>1</sup> Among these gifts and bequests was 150 acres of land on the banks of Popes Creek which Brooks conveyed to his daughter Lydia and her husband Lawrence Abbington. This small tract passed through three generations of the family before Augustine Washington leased and then bought it from Joseph Abbington in 1718.<sup>2</sup> At the time of this purchase, Washington lived with his family west of Bridges

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<sup>1</sup> David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), pp. 63 and 65; The division of Henry Brooks's tract is detailed in Charles E. Hatch, Jr., Popes Creek Plantation: Birthplace of George Washington (Washington's Birthplace, Virginia: Wakefield National Memorial Association, 1979), p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> The progress of this tract from Henry Brooks to Lydia and Lawrence Abbington and from them to their son, grandson, and great-grandson is described in the 1718 conveyance from Joseph Abbington to Augustine Washington, 19 February 1718, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 6, p. 240.

Creek on land he had inherited from his father and grandfather.<sup>3</sup>

Augustine Washington apparently acquired Abbington's tract with the intention of establishing a new domestic seat for his Westmoreland County plantations. In 1722 he agreed to pay five thousand pounds of tobacco for the construction of a new house. The other party in this bargain was David Jones, a builder who possessed the skills--or at least the tools--of both a carpenter and a joiner. Between 1722 and 1726 Jones provided Washington with two bedsteads, a cradle, and a small poplar table as well as "2 mantell pieces" for the new house that was his principal responsibility. Apparently, Jones also became a member of Washington's household, for after he fell ill and died, Washington charged the estate for "his sickness and burial." While the new dwelling must have been substantially erected if woodwork for the fireplaces was prepared, Washington also claimed from Jones's administrators five hundred pounds of tobacco "to the not finishing my house."<sup>4</sup>

However the Popes Creek dwelling was ultimately completed, Augustine Washington's family were not long in residence.<sup>5</sup> In 1735, Washington moved his family to an undeveloped tract of land on Little Hunting Creek in Prince William County.<sup>6</sup> The

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<sup>3</sup> Will of John Washington, proved 1677, quoted in Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, pp. 5-6; Will of Lawrence Washington, proved 1698, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 2, p. 133.

<sup>4</sup> All of this is inferred from Washington's account with the estate of David Jones dated 8 April 1726 and included with the recorded settlement of Jones's affairs. 8 April 1726, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 1, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> At Popes Creek between 1726 and 1735, Augustine Washington buried Jane Butler, his first wife. She was the mother of his three oldest living children, Lawrence, Augustine, and Jane. He also married his second wife, Mary Ball, who presented him with three new children--George, Betty, and Samuel--before the family departed for Prince William County. Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, pp. x-xi.

Washingtons remained on this property until 1738, when the pressures of Augustine Washington's interests in the Accokeek iron works forced him to move his household to a newly purchased plantation near the mines and furnace in King George County.<sup>7</sup>

When Augustine Washington died in 1743, he left to his son Augustine Washington most of his land in Westmoreland County.<sup>8</sup> "Austin" Washington, as he was known, returned from schooling in England the year before his father's death. By 1744 he was married and settled at Pope's Creek.<sup>9</sup> Upon returning to the dwelling of his youth, Austin Washington may have found it in need of complete rebuilding. The house was about twenty years old and for almost half of that time, the surrounding plantation had been in the hands of tenants whose agreements with the Washington family probably did not include care of existing structures.<sup>10</sup> Even if the standing Popes Creek house was habitable, Austin Washington undoubtedly enlarged it once or twice during his tenure. The structure David Jones was hired to build for the elder Augustine Washington in 1723 had two fireplaces. After his death in 1762, Austin Washington's

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<sup>6</sup> In 1735 Augustine Washington's name first appears in the vestry book of Truro Parish in Prince William--later Fairfax--County. Douglas Southall Freeman, George Washington: A Biography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), v. 1, p. 53. The Little Hunting Creek tract was later renamed "Mount Vernon" by Augustine Washington's son.

<sup>7</sup> Freeman, George Washington, v. I, pp. 57-59. This plantation later became known as "Ferry Farm."

<sup>8</sup> Will of Augustine Washington, 6 May 1743, quoted in Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, pp. 41 and 45.

<sup>9</sup> Letter of John Lewis to Lawrence Washington, 28 June 1742, quoted in Freeman, George Washington, v. I, p. 70; William Aylett identified Austin Washington as his son-in-law in his will. Will of William Aylett, Westmoreland County Deeds/Wills 10, p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> Freeman, George Washington, v. I, p. 53.

executors counted five sets of hearth tools in his house.<sup>11</sup>

Austin Washington left almost "all my lands as well in this county as elsewhere" to his son William Augustine Washington.<sup>12</sup> When the young heir reached maturity, he established his own household at the Popes Creek site. He had probably enlarged the house at least once more by the winter of 1779 or 1780, when it caught fire and burned past recovery. By September of 1780 Washington and his family were living at Blenheim, a newly built dwelling on an inland site two miles southwest of Popes Creek.<sup>13</sup>

After the Revolution, William Augustine Washington and his family seemed increasingly inclined to spend their time near Washington, D. C. Although he built a big new house overlooking the Potomac River, Washington even considered disposing of his Westmoreland County property.<sup>14</sup> In 1803, he advertised for sale his several thousand acres of fertile land "on Potomack between Alexandria and the bay . . . at present cultivated as four farms."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Inventory of Augustine Washington Estate, 30 November 1762, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 4, pp. 178-180.

<sup>12</sup> Will of Augustine Washington, 25 May 1762, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 14, p. 126.

<sup>13</sup> William Augustine Washington complained to the Westmoreland County court in September of 1780 that a road to Mattox Bridge ran inconveniently close to his house. Quoted in Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, p. 79. See the entry for Blenheim elsewhere in this catalog.

<sup>14</sup> The new house was named "Haywood" and it was completed by early in 1795, when William Augustine Washington datelined a letter to his sons Augustine and Bushrod in Georgetown. Washington to Washington, 2 February 1795, letter in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence W. Latane, Jr. The size and appearance of Haywood is recorded in Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia Policy No. 1141, 14 December 1805, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>15</sup> Washington Federalist 17 March 1803, p. 4.



One of these farms was the former Popes Creek dwelling plantation.

However tempting were the offers he received, Washington ultimately declined to sell his family lands around Popes Creek, and in his will of 1810, he divided the property among his widow and children. One of his younger sons, George Corbin Washington, received over a thousand acres, "including the burnt house plantation."<sup>16</sup> Within three years, George Corbin Washington, who lived in Georgetown, sold his inherited tract to John Gray of Stafford County. This early nineteenth-century document is the first to mention that the Popes Creek plantation was "known by the name of Wakefield."<sup>17</sup>

The architectural history of the Popes Creek dwelling is difficult to sort out from the hagiography of its most famous inhabitant. George Washington himself mentioned the "ancient dwelling seat" as his earliest home, and though it was destroyed by fire in 1779 or 1780, the "birth house" was the subject of numerous idealized descriptions and depictions throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> The Popes Creek site was first commemorated in 1816, when George Washington Parke Custis of Arlington and "a party of gentlemen" visited Burnt House Point and marked some architectural ruins they found with a stone slab which read "Here on the 11th of February 1732, Washington was born."<sup>19</sup> In 1896, a granite obelisk was erected at Burnt House Point over some excavated brick

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<sup>16</sup> Will of William Augustine Washington, 12 July 1810, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 22, p. 167.

<sup>17</sup> Washington to Gray, 13 October 1813, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 23, p. 85.

<sup>18</sup> Washington's reference to the Popes Creek house is dated 1792. John C. Fitzpatrick, editor, The Writings of George Washington (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1939), v. 32, p. 29.

<sup>19</sup> Alexandria Gazette 1 June 1816, quoted in Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, p. 64.

foundations that were thought to be those of the Popes Creek dwelling itself. In later years, these were determined to be the footings of an outbuilding of uncertain age.<sup>20</sup>

In 1923 a group of patriotic citizens formed the Wakefield National Memorial Association "to restore the birthplace of George Washington and the graveyard of his ancestors."<sup>21</sup> Using private donations as well as funds allocated by Congress, the Association moved the obelisk in order to begin replicating the scene of Washington's nativity on what was still supposed to be the original dwelling site. A fresh look beneath the 1896 monument did not shake general confidence that the architectural remains were those of the Washington family dwelling, but problems arose when an architect began to produce designs for the reconstruction. Confronted with drawings of a dwelling that fit the modest dimensions of the excavated footings, members of the Wakefield Association could not conquer their sense that Washington's birthplace should be bigger. As it was finally constructed, the "replica" of the Wakefield Mansion was considerably longer and wider than the remains of the misunderstood outbuilding that it displaced. It was also much more substantial of fabric and polished in detail than any documentary or archaeological particulars of the Popes Creek site could support.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, pp. 73-75.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, p. 83. The association chose "Wakefield" even though this name for the Popes Creek plantation does not appear in any historical document before the 1813 transaction between George Corbin Washington and John Gray. The burial ground in question was located on Bridges Creek near John Washington's seventeenth-century dwelling site. It was used by the Washington family until at least the middle of the eighteenth century. The surviving graves and stones were moved to a site near the reconstructed mansion. Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, pp. 75-77.

Late in 1930 at about the time the Wakefield Association began accepting bids for the birthplace reconstruction, archaeologists made an important discovery. Working to locate surviving remains of colonial outbuildings, they came upon the foundations and cellars of the real Popes Creek dwelling. The significance of this archaeological site was only gradually understood, and not until the Wakefield Mansion was completed and open to the public. Eventually, the National Park Service, which has owned and administered the property since 1930, funded a thorough archaeological investigation of the remains they persistently called "Building X," apparently in deference to those who remained committed to the authenticity of the established "birth house site."<sup>23</sup>

What the archaeologists found was a brick cellar that had been excavated during the colonial period to a depth of between 5 and 7 feet below grade. Foundations for four chimneys confirm that the structure was a dwelling, and the thickness of the brick walls suggest that this dwelling was made of wood. Most of the artifacts found in and around the foundations date from the second and third quarters of the eighteenth century. Their diversity and quantity indicate that the house was inhabited at the time it was destroyed. Their condition confirms that the house was destroyed by fire.<sup>24</sup>

The English-bond brickwork of the Popes Creek house foundation has seams and offset joints consistent with four distinct building

<sup>22</sup> The ordeal of designing and building the Wakefield Mansion is described in Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, pp. 83-86.

<sup>23</sup> In more recent years, officials have accepted "Building X" as the site of the Washington dwelling and have delineated with furrows of oyster shell. Wakefield Mansion, now called the "Memorial House" is interpreted as "a representative example of a typical plantation house in tidewater Virginia." Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, pp. 88-89, 98.

<sup>24</sup> Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, p. 91.

campaigns. The east section, measuring about 35 by 20 feet, was the earliest.<sup>25</sup> The west section, which measures about 25 by 20 feet was probably built next. With this addition, the builder had achieved a house that was about 60 feet long and 20 feet wide. It was probably one and a half stories tall with a gable roof and a brick chimney on each gable end. Access to the cellar was by way of a bulkhead entrance on the original east end of the house.

Two subsequent periods of construction produced wood-framed wings with exterior end chimneys on the southeast and southwest corners of the house. Both of these additions measure about 18 feet square, but they were joined to the existing structure in distinct ways. The southeast wing terminates at the plane of the original south wall, while the southwest wing at least partially encloses the west gable end of the earlier addition.

This archaeological evidence suggests that the development of the Popes Creek house began with the construction of a small but substantial framed dwelling built above a masonry cellar and heated by an exterior brick chimney. The original plan probably involved two rooms on the main floor, and one of them had no fireplace.<sup>26</sup> When the west section was completed, the interior partitions were probably adjusted to create a plan of two large heated rooms separated by a central passage. Above stairs, two loft rooms may have had fireplaces as well. The eventual addition of the wings gave the Popes Creek house two more heated rooms on the main floor and perhaps two in the lofts above.

Fitting the archaeological evidence of the Popes Creek house

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<sup>25</sup> This inference is based not on any investigation of the builder's trenches but on scrutiny of the foundations themselves. The east section is the only one to have four continuous walls with finished corners.

<sup>26</sup> It is also possible that the process of extending the house involved the destruction of a chimney on the original west end of the house.

with its documentary record requires a daunting level of speculation. Small as it is, the first section of the excavated foundation probably supported a dwelling far too substantial to have been commissioned by Augustine Washington for five thousand pounds of tobacco. If Washington's very advantageous agreement with David Jones covered not the masonry but only the wooden components of a house that measured 35 by 20 feet, then it is possible that George Washington was indeed born in the east end of the excavated structure.<sup>27</sup> It is more likely, however, that upon returning to Popes Creek plantation in 1743 or 1744, Austin Washington serially built the first three components of the dwelling discovered in 1930. Counting fireplaces in two rooms above stairs, this would have given him the five hearths indicated in his inventory. After 1762, William Augustine Washington contented himself with one additional wing and perhaps some new closets and porches.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> In 1727, the vestry of Petsworth Parish in Gloucester County reckoned that 9876 pounds of tobacco was worth £41.3.0. At this rate, the house that David Jones built for Augustine Washington in the 1720s would have been worth not quite £21. C. G. Chamberlayne, editor, The Vestry Book of Petsworth Parish, Gloucester County, Virginia, 1677-1793 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1933), p. 201. What sort of dwelling would this amount of money buy? One of the most contemporary of available comparisons exists among the records of Newport Parish in Isle of Wight County. In 1729 the vestry agreed to pay £440 for the construction of a brick glebe house that was to be 36 feet long and by 20 feet wide. It was to have walls that were 12 feet high and two gable-end chimneys. These characteristics suggest that a dwelling worth £21 was very small, lightly constructed, and plainly finished. Vestry Book of Newport Parish, Isle of Wight County, 1724-1772, p. 43, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia. Carl R. Lounsbury of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation kindly supplied the data for these inferences.







Without a room-by-room inventory, it is impossible to know how the Popes Creek house functioned as social space. Nevertheless, there are important suggestions to be found among the room designations supplied for Augustine Washington's 1743 inventory in King George County. This house enclosed a passage between two principal rooms called a "hall" and a "parlor." Behind each of these rooms--and apparently accessible from them--was a "hall back room" and a "parlor back room." These, at a guess, were in added one-story one-room wings. Above stairs, there were but two rooms, each designated with reference to the rooms that were directly below: the "hall chamber" and the "parlor chamber."<sup>29</sup> Of course, surviving evidence at Popes Creek suggests that the house Augustine Washington left behind in 1735 was much smaller than the King George County dwelling in which he died. Moreover, if Austin Washington is responsible for much of the construction at Popes Creek, it is important to point out that he was in England by the time his parents moved to King George County. Still, if the family's style of living had any influence, then it is possible to imagine--no more than that--a connection between Augustine Washington's use of domestic space and the organization of the house that his son and grandson built, enlarged, and made their own.

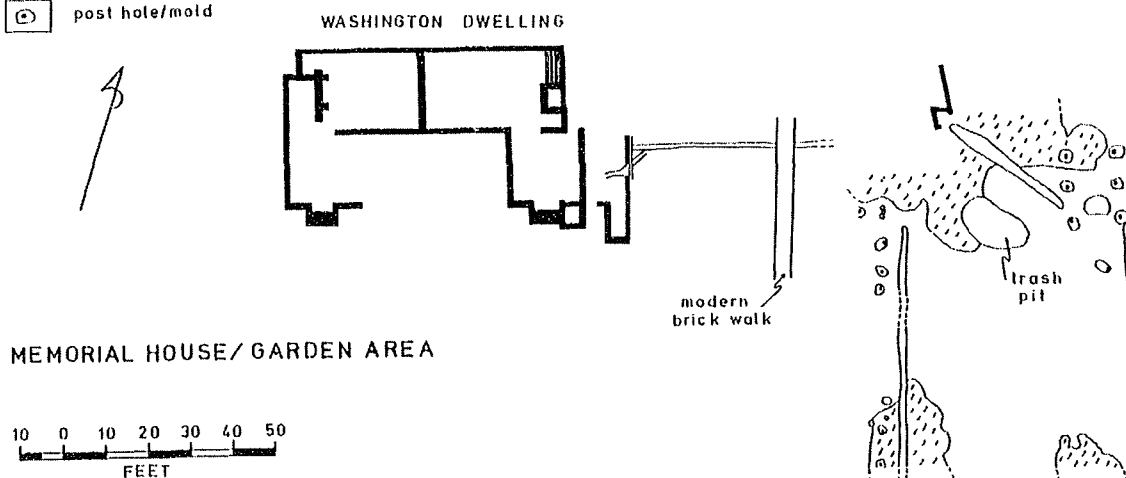
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<sup>28</sup> It is equally possible, however, that William Augustine Washington entirely demolished and rebuilt--in four stages--his father's house. Resolving this issue would require dateable artifacts from the builder's trenches of each of the dwelling's four sections.

<sup>29</sup> Inventory of Augustine Washington Estate, 1743, King George County Inventory Book 1, pp. 285-191.

# LEGEND

-  existing structure (1930's)
-  excavated
-  brick foundation
-  soil stain
-  oyster shell
-  post hole/mold



Popes Creek, Westmoreland County, Virginia, Plan of Archaeological Remains. (George Washington Birthplace National Monument.)

ROCHESTER HOUSE  
MACHODOC 7.5  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY

Although documentary evidence suggests that most eighteenth-century Virginia planters lived in dwellings with one-room plans, such houses are rare among standing buildings. Most of the few surviving examples made their way into the twentieth century as components of larger houses.<sup>1</sup> Next to Pear Valley in Northampton County, the Rochester house is the best known and best preserved Virginia example of this once commonplace dwelling form.<sup>2</sup>

While the Rochester house is similar in form to the sort of house that once dominated the Virginia countryside, it is much more substantially constructed and finely finished than the dwellings most early Virginians knew. The house is set over a cellar on a carefully laid foundation with English-bond brickwork below ground level and Flemish-bond brickwork above. A sturdy oak frame, filled with a nogging of soft bricks and mortar, was probably originally clad with feather-edge pit-sawn weatherboards similar to those

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<sup>1</sup> For an example of how an early one-room house might, through a series of changes, become embedded in a much larger dwelling, see Edward A. Chappell, "Architectural Recording and the Open-Air Museum: A View from the Field," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture II, Camille Wells, editor, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), pp. 27-28.

<sup>2</sup> William M. Kelso, "Archaeological Testing at Pear Valley, Virginia 1987-1988," unpublished report, Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, 1988. Pear Valley and the Rochester house are exceptional not because they were never changed--in fact, both houses were altered many times. They are extraordinary because the changes they sustained did not dramatically alter their original character as self-contained dwellings with one-room plans.



that still cover the gable roof.<sup>3</sup> Original door and window openings survive on the front and rear elevations.<sup>4</sup>

The most arresting feature of the Rochester house is the heavy brick chimney with two sets of paved shoulders and a stack that is T-shaped in section. The Flemish-bond brickwork of the chimney incorporates a regular pattern of glazed headers below the lower set of shoulders. A single vertical line of glazed headers marks the west face of the chimney stack as well.<sup>5</sup> The Rochester house always had a well finished interior. The loft room, like the first-story room, was originally plastered, and as the design of the chimney suggests, both rooms had fireplaces from the beginning.<sup>6</sup> During the early nineteenth century, Federal-style trim was added to many interior surfaces, but the original enclosed stair and several board-and-batten doors survive from the eighteenth century. There is also evidence that a room was built onto the east gable end during the Federal-period remodeling. This addition was one of several later accretions removed in the early years of the twentieth century, when the house received extensive and apparently much-needed repairs.

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<sup>3</sup> The present weatherboarding dates from the early twentieth century. The original roof covering of the Rochester house was scrutinized by Mark R. Wenger on 22 May 1990, when workmen were in the process of replacing the existing outer covering of sheet metal. Report in architectural files, Department of Architectural Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

<sup>4</sup> Windows on the gable-end walls date from the early twentieth century and obliterate all evidence of any previous openings.

<sup>5</sup> This decorative device was also employed on the chimney at the Cox house in Northumberland County. For a photograph and brief description of the Cox house, see Chapter 3.

<sup>6</sup> On the first story, the joists are chamfered and were originally exposed. This ceiling was first plastered during the early nineteenth century.

The Rochester house is now oriented toward the south, but the regular pattern of glazed headers in the north foundation wall indicate that the dwelling originally faced the other way. Like Elba, it was built on one of a series of low hills that characterize Westmoreland County's "forest."<sup>7</sup> Before the Revolution, residents of the Northern Neck did not prize this inland spine of their terrain because of its relative distance from navigable water. It was thus accessible to planters like Nicholas Rochester whose initial goals and means were comparatively modest.

Nicholas Rochester was living in Westmoreland County by 1690, when he appeared in court to testify in a suit involving one of his neighbors.<sup>8</sup> By that date he had probably purchased from John Jenkins his first hundred acres of land. This small plantation was part of the rolling, heavily wooded land around the source of Nomini Creek that was known as "Nominy Forest." In 1719 he made of this hundred acres a gift to his son William Rochester, and while no will or inventory survives, Nicholas Rochester apparently died shortly thereafter.<sup>9</sup>

Through successful cultivation of his inherited resources, William Rochester was able gradually to augment his holdings. In 1740 he paid taxes for 270 acres.<sup>10</sup> By the date of his death on 1750 he had accumulated for himself and his son John Rochester a total of 420 acres.<sup>11</sup> He had also purchased six slaves whose

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<sup>7</sup>See the entry for Elba elsewhere in this catalog.

<sup>8</sup>Westmoreland County Order Book 1690-1698, p. 27.

<sup>9</sup>Rochester to Rochester, 26 May 1719, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 6, p. 482. It is this deed of gift that describes the tract as "in Nominy Forrest" and explains that Nicholas Rochester acquired the tract from John Jenkins at some unspecified date.

<sup>10</sup>The 1740 rent roll for Cople Parish, printed in David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), pp. 9-10.

principal job it was to help him cultivate his land. Together, these slaves represented about 40 percent of his total personal wealth.<sup>12</sup>

Although William Rochester's executors found in his household such domestic comforts as three beds and a silk rug, most of his inventoried accoutrements were tools and supplies he needed for successful planting. It appears that one way Rochester accumulated the resources to invest in land and slaves was through decent but unpretentious living. His dwelling contained only "1 pr of dog irons" and it is likely that the single hearth where these were in use was set into a plastered wooden chimney at one end of a small dwelling set on wooden blocks or posts.<sup>13</sup>

John Rochester enjoyed his patrimony for only a few years. He died unexpectedly and without a will in 1754, leaving behind a wife and at least two small children. Because so little time had passed since his own father's death, John Rochester's inventory contains almost exactly the same range and quantity of goods that his father had left behind. It does appear that he had improved his father's dwelling with an additional room, for among the household effects his appraisers listed were "two pare of dogs . . two pare of fier tongs and shovel."<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, his acquisition in four years of nine new slaves suggests that he had intended to continue his

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<sup>11</sup> The land acquisitions of William Rochester are outlined in Laurie Black, "National Register of Historic Places: Nomination for the Rochester House, Westmoreland County, Virginia," (Richmond: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 1990). The subsequent history of the Rochester property suggests that all or most of this land was contiguous.

<sup>12</sup> Inventory of William Rochester Estate, 30 October 1750, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 3, pp. 142-143. The six slaves were worth £154 of the £379 total estate value.

<sup>13</sup> William Rochester Inventory, pp. 142-143.

<sup>14</sup> Inventory of John Rochester Estate, 26 November 1754, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 6, p. 52.

father's strategy of investing the profits of his harvests in fresh land and labor--the means of increasing his wealth as a planter.<sup>15</sup>

Several years after John Rochester died, his widow married Thomas Critcher. In 1763, the Critchers resettled themselves and the Rochester children in North Carolina.<sup>16</sup> Three years later John Rochester II returned to Westmoreland County where he married, took over his father's plantation, and set about developing the local ties that eventually won him several county offices.<sup>17</sup> It was also he who built the small but solid new dwelling house with a substantial foundation and a handsomely laid up chimney, characteristics that Virginians widely recognized as indications of successfully managed affairs.<sup>18</sup> When real and personal property taxes were first levied for Virginia during the 1780s, John Rochester was charged for 334 acres of land and eighteen slaves.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> John Rochester owned eleven slaves to his father's six. Nine of these men, women, and boys were new to the Rochester plantation since the death of William Rochester. John Rochester Inventory, p. 52.

<sup>16</sup> Sylvia Rochester Drummond, Rochester Descendants in America, (Baton Rouge: 1979), cited in Black, "National Register Nomination."

<sup>17</sup> In 1773 John Rochester paid his stepfather £120 for his mother's dower interest in the Rochester property. Critcher to Rochester, 28 September 1773, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 15, p. 192. John Rochester was named to the vestry of Cople Parish in 1785. William Meade, Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1857), v. 2, p. 153.

<sup>18</sup> It is said that the date 1746 was inscribed with the initials "WR" in a chimney brick that was removed during this century by a Rochester descendant. Nevertheless, it appears that John Rochester II built the surviving one-room house. There will be firmer proof of this construction date when the dendrochronological analysis of first-period wood is complete.

<sup>19</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1782 and

By 1790, Rochester was supplementing his livelihood as a planter with the position of county sheriff. He was perhaps abroad in the service of this office in 1794, when on the road between the Westmoreland County Courthouse and his dwelling plantation, he was thrown from his horse and killed.<sup>20</sup>

The 1795 inventory of his estate suggests that John Rochester and his wife Ann Jordan permitted themselves more domestic niceties than the earlier Rochesters had known. Although they lived modestly in a house with but one room on the main floor and another room in the loft above, they enjoyed the comforts of assorted ceramic and pewter tableware, pots for tea and coffee, and a little silver. Such goods as these were present in quantities sufficient to equal the value of John Rochester's fourteen slaves.<sup>21</sup>

In 1798, John Rochester's eldest son--another John Rochester--sold all of his Westmoreland County property to John Gordon and took his younger brothers and sisters with him to Kentucky.<sup>22</sup> John Gordon died in 1801. His widow continued to pay taxes on the

Westmoreland County Personal Property Tax Records, 1787, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia. John Rochester may have leased some of his land to another planter. Later transactions involving his property suggest that he actually owned around four hundred acres of land.

<sup>20</sup> Rochester's death was the subject of an investigation and was eventually determined to be an accident. Sherwin McRae and Raleigh Colston, editors, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, 1794-1795 (Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1888), pp. 377-378.

<sup>21</sup> Inventory of John Rochester II, 20 December 1795, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 8, pp. 328-330. Although Rochester paid taxes on eighteen slaves in 1787, his executors counted only fourteen in 1795.

<sup>22</sup> Rochester to Gordon, 2 October 1798, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 21, p. 66.

property until 1809, when she sold to Henry Yeatman 450 acres of land described as "Rochester's and Porter's parcels that adjoin."<sup>23</sup> Five years later Yeatman sold 406 acres of the land, including the site of the Rochester house, to John Graham.<sup>24</sup> It apparently was Graham and his wife, Mary Middleton, who added a room to the existing dwelling and retrimmed the interior with stylish new woodwork. Unlike the Rochesters, Graham proved unfortunate or unskillful in the management of his affairs and by 1823, the magnitude of his accumulated debts forced the court-supervised sale of all his property. Two of Mary Middleton Graham's relatives came to the family's rescue: John Middleton bought three hundred acres of the Rochester tract and conveyed it in trust to William Middleton, who permitted the Grahams to remain in residence.<sup>25</sup> Members of the Middleton family continued to pay taxes on the property until 1870.<sup>26</sup> The Rochester house and its site changed hands several times between 1870 and 1920, when Randolph W. Courtney bought the property, repaired the colonial dwelling, and lived in it until a new house was completed. In 1978 James Welford Courtney sold the Rochester house and about thirty-one acres to the current owners.<sup>27</sup>

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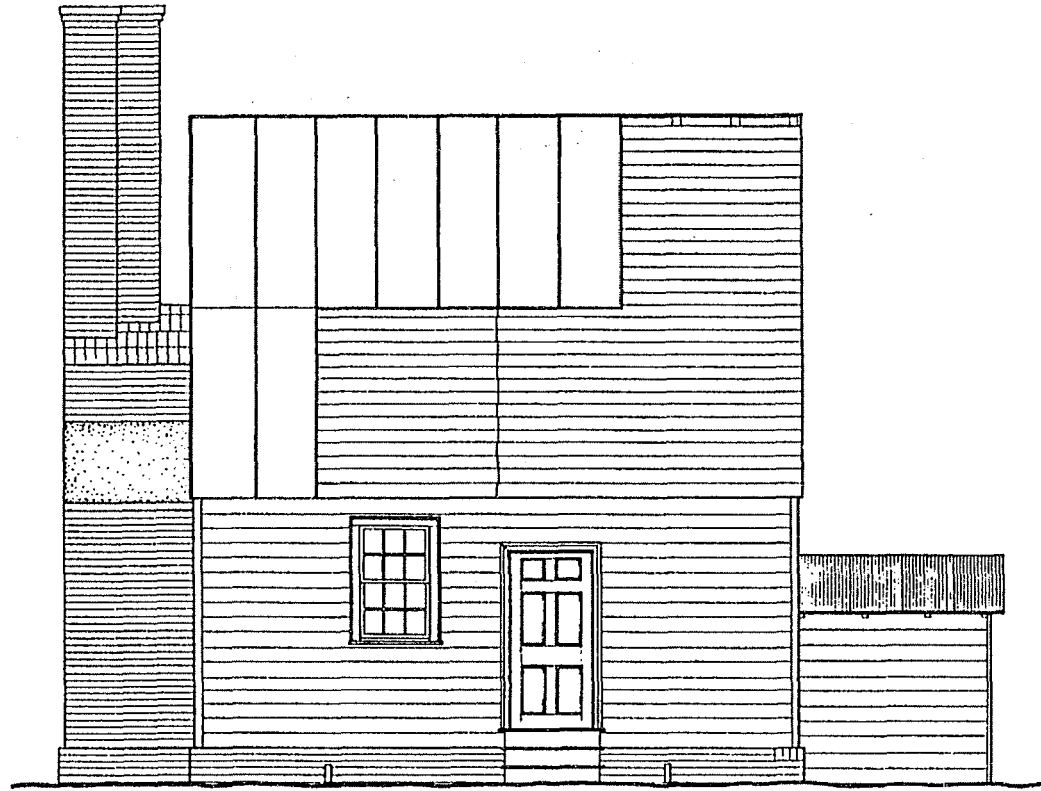
<sup>23</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1798-1809, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia; Gordon to Yeatman, 2 January 1809, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 22, p. 101.

<sup>24</sup> Yeatman to Graham, 18 February 1814, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 23, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Middleton to Middleton, 6 March 1823, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 24, pp. 512-513.

<sup>26</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1825-1870, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>27</sup> Ownership of the Rochester property since 1870 is outlined in Black, "National Register Nomination."



Elevation of the Rochester House, Westmoreland County, Virginia.  
(Edward A. Chappell and Willie Graham, Colonial Williamsburg  
Foundation.)

STRATFORD  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
STRATFORD HALL 7.5

Stratford is--and perhaps always was--the largest eighteenth-century house on Virginia's Northern Neck.<sup>1</sup> Built by Thomas Lee around 1740, the house is associated with one of the few colonial Virginia families to achieve what, in nostalgic renderings, all affluent Chesapeake planters enjoyed: wealth and standing on both sides of the Atlantic. Thus with respect to the outlook of the builder and his family, Stratford is a truly Anglo-American country house.

Stratford was built on a tract of land bounded dramatically on the north by a series of steep cliffs overlooking the Potomac River. The dwelling site and 1050 acres of land were first patented in 1651 by Nathaniel Pope, who expanded his claim to 1550 acres five years later.<sup>2</sup> At his death in 1660, he bequeathed his "land and

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<sup>1</sup> Of surviving houses on the Northern Neck, only Mount Airy and Sabine Hall in Richmond County are comparable in area. Peckatone in Westmoreland County may have been as large, although in 1815, it was valued at \$2000, whereas Stratford was considered worth \$3500. This very subjective evaluation was based on an range of considerations, and size was only one of them. Westmoreland County Personal Property Tax Records, 1815, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia. See the entry for Peckatone elsewhere in this catalog. Sabine Hall and Mount Airy in Richmond County are briefly discussed and pictured in Chapter 4.

<sup>2</sup> David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), p. 65. Nathaniel Pope first settled in St. Mary's City, Maryland in 1637. Though he began his Chesapeake career as an illiterate common planter, Pope was obviously clever, energetic, and, where Virginia's deadly climate was concerned, lucky. By the time he died in 1660, he was the prosperous owner of more than four thousand acres of land in



plantation situate upon the Clifts," to his son Thomas Pope.<sup>3</sup> The younger man renewed his father's patent and extended it to about 2400 acres in 1664.<sup>4</sup> When Thomas Pope died in 1684, the Westmoreland County lands descended to his widow and sons. In 1716, the surviving Pope heirs sold the Clifts to Thomas Lee, who lived several miles down-river at his plantation on Lower Machodoc Creek.<sup>5</sup>

Thomas Lee was a third-generation Virginian. His grandfather Richard Lee had come to Virginia around 1640. Apparently because of connections made in England with Virginia's royal governor, this son of an English cloth merchant quickly acquired an enviable position in colonial administration. Over the next twenty-five years, Richard Lee survived dangerous shifts in political factions as well as lethal Chesapeake maladies to acquire an extraordinary

Virginia. He had also become a colonel in the militia, and a county justice as well. Fraser D. Neiman, The "Manner House" Before Stratford: Discovering the Clifts Plantation (Stratford: Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, 1980), pp. 2-3; Fraser D. Neiman, "An Evolutionary Approach to Archaeological Inference: Aspects of Architectural Variation in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," (Ph. D. Dissertation: Yale University, 1990), pp. 287-288.

<sup>3</sup> Will of Nathaniel Pope, 20 April 1660, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 1, p. 115.

<sup>4</sup> Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> The sequence of ownership that began with Thomas Pope's death appear in a 1718 document confirming Thomas Lee's right of possession. Pope to Lee, 13 February 1716, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 6, pp. 336-343. In addition to the plantation, Lee assumed "quiet possession and seizin of the manner house erected on the second clift." This dwelling, a seventeenth-century earthfast tenant house built during the ownership of Thomas Pope, was the focus of intensive archaeological investigation between 1976 and 1978. See Neiman, Discovering the Clifts, especially pp. 5-47, and Neiman "Evolutionary Approach," pp. 286-339.

fortune.<sup>6</sup> By 1658 he was sufficiently wealthy to consider resettling in England under prestigious circumstances. He thus enrolled his elder sons in English schools and acquired an estate in the village of Stratford-Langton, where his wife and younger children went to live. During a protracted visit back to Virginia in 1664, however, Richard Lee apparently realized how difficult it would be for his heirs to make their New World estates prosper from afar. Thus when he fell gravely ill, Lee wrote a will directing his widow to bring those of their children who were inclined back to Virginia.<sup>7</sup> These reimmigrating offspring included Richard Lee II, who settled on inherited land near Machodoc Creek in Westmoreland County and married the daughter of a neighboring planter. Thomas Lee was among the youngest of their several children.<sup>8</sup>

By the time Thomas Lee bought the Pope tract in 1716, he was advantageously established as naval officer of the lower Potomac and agent for the Northern Neck proprietary.<sup>9</sup> In the decade

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<sup>6</sup> In addition to lucrative political appointments and an advantageous marriage, Richard Lee imported indentured servants and slaves, traded with Indians as well as with the English and Dutch, and saw to the clearing of increasingly large landholdings in both Virginia and Maryland. The career of Richard Lee "the Founder" is described gracefully but without citations in Paul C. Nagel, The Lees of Virginia: Seven Generations of an American Family (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 7-20.

<sup>7</sup> Lee ended his life at his plantation on Dividing Creek in Northumberland County. This property descended to his son Hancock and became the plantation known as Ditchley. The eighteenth-century house on that site is treated briefly in Chapter 4. Richard Lee's will is abstracted in William Meade, Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1857), v. 2, pp. 144-145.

<sup>8</sup> Like his father before him and his sons after him, Richard Lee II was favored by the royal governor with the highest and most lucrative of colonial offices. His life and career are discussed in Nagel, Lees of Virginia, pp. 21-32.

following his acquisition of the Clifts, Lee married Hannah Ludwell and the couple started a family at Machodoc in the house Lee's father had built. In 1729 his dwelling was robbed and burned by several servants who were also recently transported English convicts.<sup>10</sup> Although there is a longstanding tradition that the destruction at Machodoc was behind Thomas Lee's decision to move to the Clifts, it is clear that Lee quickly set about reestablishing himself at Machodoc. Two months after the fire, he petitioned the county court to permit him to "turn the road" near the plantation, "he designing to build a dwelling house on the top of the hill near where the road now passes."<sup>11</sup>

It was not until after 1733 when Lee was appointed to the governor's Council that he demonstrated any interest in erecting a new dwelling at the Clifts, which he renamed "Stratford" after the property his grandfather had bought in England.<sup>12</sup> In 1734 he recorded a survey of the tract and began to enlarge it with

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Lee's public career is laid out in Jeanne A. Calhoun, "Thomas Lee of Stratford, 1690-1750: Founder of a Virginia Dynasty," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 41 (December 1991), pp. 4689-4702. For more about the Northern Neck proprietary, see Chapter 1.

<sup>10</sup> There appear to have been four robbers and one accomplice. The most informed summary of this crime, which attracted the attention of the royal governor and most other affluent members of Chesapeake society, appears in Calhoun, "Thomas Lee," pp. 4692-4694.

<sup>11</sup> Westmoreland County Court Order Book 1721-1731, p. 255, quoted in Calhoun, "Thomas Lee," p. 4694.

<sup>12</sup> Alonzo T. Dill and Mary Tyler Cheek, A Visit to Stratford and The Story of the Lees (Stratford: Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, 1986), p. 41. By the middle of the nineteenth century, it was widely assumed that Stratford was a name associated with the ancestral English home of an aristocratic family. Meade, Old Churches, v. 2, pp. 137-139, 144.

acquisitions of adjacent land.<sup>13</sup> Timbers for framing the floors and roof of Stratford were first cut in 1737, although such a monumental building campaign surely required five or more years to complete.<sup>14</sup> Thomas Lee had apparently moved his family to Stratford in 1746, when he again petitioned the county court to move a road "that now leads through the plantation where he formerly lived."<sup>15</sup>

During the same years that Stratford was a-building, Thomas Lee's responsibilities required long periods of absence from Westmoreland County. Because much of his energy was thus consumed by official business, it is a matter of recent conjecture that Hannah Ludwell Lee actually managed her husband's plantations and oversaw the construction of Stratford. Indeed, it is said that Philip Ludwell Lee later observed to visitors at Stratford that the house represented "what it is to be ruled by a woman."<sup>16</sup>

When Thomas Lee died in 1750, Stratford descended to Philip

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<sup>13</sup> The survey appears in Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 8, pp. 234-236. The supplemental purchases of land are mentioned in Calhoun, "Thomas Lee," p. 4697.

<sup>14</sup> The Robert E. Lee Memorial Association announced on 7 September 1988 the results of dendrochronological tests performed on structural timbers by Herman J. Heikkinen. For a summary of Heikkinen's methods, see Mark R. Edwards, "Dating Historic Buildings in Lower Southern Maryland with Dendrochronology," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture I, Camille Wells, editor, (Annapolis: Vernacular Architecture Forum, 1982; rpt. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), pp. 153-158.

<sup>15</sup> Westmoreland County Order Book 1743-1747, p. 121, quoted in Calhoun, "Thomas Lee," p. 4697. This former dwelling plantation is undoubtedly Machodoc, for the plantation road in question was to lead out to the main road to nearby Yeocomico Church.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Carter Lee Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia. See also Calhoun, "Thomas Lee," p. 4698 and Nagel, Lees of Virginia, p. 43.

Ludwell Lee, the oldest of his eight children.<sup>17</sup> The new head of the family was also required to distribute various bequests to his siblings, a responsibility he never fully discharged. Historians interpret this failure as one sign of a self-centered and imperious nature, but it is just as likely that Philip Ludwell Lee needed more than his share of the family's resources to maintain Stratford in its presentation of gentility and affluence. As Lee wrote to one younger brother, "you know, the repairs of my great house are large every year."<sup>18</sup>

Philip Ludwell Lee died suddenly in 1775 and Stratford descended to his infant son Philip. After the child was killed in a fall down Stratford's steps, the estate devolved to Philip Ludwell Lee's widow and daughters. Elizabeth, Matilda, and Flora Lee jointly owned Stratford until 1789, but it was Matilda Lee who became mistress of the household in 1782 when she married her cousin Henry "Lighthorse Harry" Lee.<sup>19</sup> Although Harry Lee's dominion over

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<sup>17</sup> Will of Thomas Lee, 30 July 1751, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 11, p. 311. Lee had seven other children who survived to adulthood. In order of birth, they were Hannah Ludwell, who married Gawin Corbin of Peckatone, Thomas Ludwell, Richard Henry, who built Chantilly, Francis Lightfoot, for whom John Tayloe built Menokin, Alice, William, and Arthur. See the entries for Peckatone and Chantilly elsewhere in this catalog. The original drawings for Menokin appears in Chapter 4.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Nagel, Lees of Virginia, p. 75. The tenure of Philip Ludwell Lee as master of Stratford is described in Nagel, Lees of Virginia, pp. 65-74. One excellent account of the ways in which a big and expensively finished house could drain a Virginia planter's resources is in Betty Crowe Leviner, "The Pages and Rosewell," Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts 13 (May 1967), pp. 1-51.

<sup>19</sup> Henry Lee first assumed payment of taxes on Stratford in 1783. Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1782-1783, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia. The sequence of ownership following the death of Philip Ludwell Lee is outlined in Dill and Cheek, A Visit to Stratford, pp. 43, 51-52.

Stratford spanned less than a decade, it was he who most drastically reversed the fortunes of the house and surrounding improvements. In order to cover ever-increasing debts, Lee sold off many of the outlying and income-producing components of the Stratford tract. Matilda Lee came to recognize her husband's irresponsibility, and before her death in 1790, she arranged for two cousins to hold Stratford in trust for her three minor children.<sup>20</sup>

Henry Lee, Jr., the younger of Matilda Lee's sons, took possession of Stratford in 1809.<sup>21</sup> After several years spent in a fruitless search for means to support himself and his severely diminished estate, Lee successfully courted Ann McCarty, the orphaned daughter of a wealthy neighboring planter. As a result of the marriage, Lee gained the comfort of his bride's substantial inheritance as well as that of her younger sister Elizabeth, who became his ward. McCarty money permitted the three young people to establish their household in a stylishly refurbished Stratford, and although Henry Lee showed little diligence in the management of his affairs, the future looked bright.

In 1820, however, Henry and Ann Lee's small daughter died. Family tradition holds that she was the second child to fall to her death down the Stratford stairs. Ann Lee was consumed by a grief that gradually gave way to drug addiction, and amidst the general distress, Henry Lee took sexual advantage of his young sister-in-

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<sup>20</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1782-1790, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia. Nagel, Lees of Virginia, pp. 164-165.

<sup>21</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1807-1809, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia. After the death of Matilda Lee, Harry Lee married Ann Hill Carter, with whom he lived sporadically at Stratford until 1809. Several of their children, including Robert E. Lee, were born in the house. Dill and Cheek, pp. 51-54.

law. When the affair became known, Elizabeth McCarty's stepfather rescued her from Lee's custody, demanding that he relinquish guardianship of her fortune. To pay this debt, Henry Lee was forced to sell Stratford in 1822.<sup>22</sup>

It was a Marylander, William Clarke Somerville, who bought Stratford in 1822. Among the terms of the transaction was his agreement to pay restitution to the McCartys.<sup>23</sup> Somerville never fully honored this obligation, and when he died in 1828, the county court seized and sold Stratford on behalf of the unpaid McCarty claim. At the auction, the highest bidder was Henry D. Storke, who had recently married Henry Lee's wronged sister-in-law. It was through these events that Elizabeth McCarty Storke became--and remained for over fifty years--the mistress of Stratford. After her death in 1879, the house and surrounding farms descended to her stepfather's heirs. They sold Stratford to the newly formed Robert E. Lee Memorial Association in 1929.<sup>24</sup>

The dwelling site of Stratford is located about a mile south of the Potomac River. The house stands on a knoll in the center of a quadrangle created by four brick dependencies. Built to one and a half stories of Flemish-bond brickwork, all of these structures were part of the original scheme of construction.<sup>25</sup> The two south outbuildings have four-bay elevations, clipped-gable roofs, and central chimneys.<sup>26</sup> The two north buildings are smaller, with

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<sup>22</sup> Nagel, Lees of Virginia, pp. 206-212.

<sup>23</sup> Lee to Somerville, 27 June 1822, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 24, p. 346.

<sup>24</sup> Nagel, Lees of Virginia, pp. 215-216.

<sup>25</sup> Dendrochronological analysis of original roofing members indicate that structural wood for the dependencies was cut between 1700 and 1744. Personal communication with Elizabeth Laurent, Curator of Stratford, Robert E. Lee Memorial Association, 13 July 1989.

<sup>26</sup> The chimneys of the two south dependencies are constructed

three-bay elevations, hipped roofs, and interior end-wall chimneys. While the function of these flanking structures probably varied with each generation of inhabitants, insurance policies written for Stratford in 1801 and 1805 suggest that the southeast building was the original kitchen. The southwest dependency, in use at the end of the eighteenth century as a "work shop," become a "servants house" by 1805. During Harry Lee's tenure, the northeast building was designated first as a "lumber house" and then as an "office." The northwest building was the gardener's house.<sup>27</sup> These structures were but four of perhaps a dozen buildings where servants and slaves worked to make life pleasant and convenient for the Lee household.<sup>28</sup> They also made use of the ground story of the dwelling itself, which was originally devoted to service facilities of various sorts.<sup>29</sup>

with incised arches that correspond to the arches built between the chimneys of the main house.

<sup>27</sup> Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia Policy No. 515, 21 October 1801 and Policy No. 585, 20 December 1805, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>28</sup> A brick stable and coach house built in two stages between 1750 and 1800 is still located southwest of the Stratford quadrangle. The 1801 insurance policy confirms the presence near the dwelling site of a second brick stable, a wooden barn, two stone quarters, and a brick structure that served as a combined smoke and meat house. Mutual Assurance Society Policy No. 515. Auxiliary dwellings as well as storage and service structures of every description dotted outlying sections of the Stratford property as well.

<sup>29</sup> The function of the ground-story rooms varied over time, but during the eighteenth century, they included a spinning room, a servant's lodging room, a housekeeper's room and storage rooms of several kinds. Inventory of Thomas Lee Estate, 17 August 1758, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 4, pp. 77-78; Inventory of Philip Ludwell Lee Estate, 20 March 1776, Westmoreland County



The Stratford house is a two-story brick structure with an H-shaped form and a hipped roof. The walls are made of expertly laid Flemish-bond brickwork that accentuates the dwelling's three distinct levels with variations of pattern and detail. Perhaps to emphasize the link between the original functions of the four brick outbuildings and those of the dwelling's ground-floor service rooms, the brickwork of the first level is similar to that of the dependencies, with regular glazed headers, thick white mortar joints, and undressed segmental-arched openings. Original ground-story doorways are centered on the east and west ends of the house, and when the house was built, there were also four service entrances symmetrically placed in the central recession on the north side of the house.

Above a molded water table, the bricks of the main-floor level are consistently dark red in color with bright red rubbed bricks at the edges. Finely gauged jackarches surmount all of the door and window openings of the main story and the masonry is laid with consistently thin joints of mortar. Doorways opening into the main story are centered on all four elevations. Those on the north and south sides of the house are Stratford's most formal points of entry.

Interrupting the hipped roof in two clusters are eight chimney stacks made of brickwork that resumes the scheme of thick mortar joints and regular glazed headers. This variegated masonry enhances the building's look of solidity and costliness, for it signals that even near the upper corbelling of the chimneys, the walls of the stacks are about eight inches thick.<sup>30</sup> Stratford's chimneys are joined

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Record/Inventory Book 6, pp. 173-175.

<sup>30</sup> While the largest and most elaborate early Virginia houses have bonded chimney stacks similar to those at Stratford, the brickwork of most traditional chimneys--even those that are expensively laid and dressed--usually shifts from Flemish bond to unbroken stretcher coursing as the stack narrows and the flues

near their caps by brick arches, and the wooden balustrades fitted in these arched openings are all that remains of Stratford's most elegantly eccentric feature. When the house was built, the space created by the chimney quadrants was roofed, and a balustraded walkway about 11 feet wide extended along the ridge of the roof between these two chimney porches. Family documents mention evening entertainments of music and dancing on this rooftop contrivance, which was accessible by way of a ladder stair through the attic.<sup>31</sup>

During the early 1930s the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association engaged Fiske Kimball to supervise a restoration of Stratford. Most of the exterior wood fittings--including all window sash--were replaced during this period. A particularly obtrusive result of Kimball's attention are the brick and stone porches and steps that he designed to provide access to the four main-story doorways.<sup>32</sup>

Sketches of the house drawn in 1801 and 1805 indicate that early approaches to these entrances were made of wood. "Porticoes" on the north and east elevations were semi-circular in plan. A small

collect. Examples of this change survive at the Rochester house and on the addition to Oakley. See the entry for the Rochester house elsewhere in this catalog. Oakley in Lancaster County figures briefly in Chapter 4.

<sup>31</sup> Nagel wrote that when Harry Lee arrived at Stratford "to claim his bride," Matilda Lee and her family were lounging in one of these chimney porches listening to musicians who were assembled in the other. Nagel, Lees of Virginia, p. 164. References to rooftop frolics were misunderstood until 1984, when Paul Buchanan and Charles Phillips initiated their intensive reinvestigation of Stratford's physical history. "Report by Phillips and Buchanan," unpublished structures report, Robert E. Lee Memorial Association, Stratford, Virginia, 1984.

<sup>32</sup> The heavy stone balustrade of the north and south stairs were drawn from a surviving early baluster that was apparently once part of some garden ornament.

rectangular porch sheltered the east end of the house, and a plain set of steps provided access to the doorway on the south elevation.<sup>33</sup>

The main-floor plan of Stratford involves a large central room that occupies the entire space within the dwelling's hyphen. Stratford's north and south entrances open directly into this "great hall."<sup>34</sup> Both wings of the house are bisected by central passages which extend from the great hall to the dwelling's east and west exterior doorways. The ground-story plan is roughly the same, except that the space within the hyphen was originally partitioned into several unheated storage and work rooms.

In terms of finish as well as size, Stratford's great hall was always the dominant room in the house. Once among the most expensively and fashionably finished rooms in the colony, it is the only room at Stratford that still looks much as it did in the middle of the eighteenth century. The walls are fully paneled with molded chair rails and baseboards.<sup>35</sup> Flanking the room's twelve window and door openings are Corinthian pilasters set on pedestals, and the ceiling is dramatically coved above a molded architrave, frieze, and cornice. Stratford's great hall was apparently designed as a very early version of the central and elegant "saloon" that the Virginia gentry began to plan for their houses more frequently after the middle of the century.<sup>36</sup> In 1779 Thomas Anburey had an

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<sup>33</sup> Mutual Assurance Society Policy No. 515 and No. 585.

<sup>34</sup> This is what Thomas Shippen called the "central room" at Stratford when he came to visit his Virginia relatives during the summer of 1790. Letter of Thomas Lee Shippen to William Shippen, Jr., 29 September 1790, Shippen Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

<sup>35</sup> The present baseboard dates from the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

<sup>36</sup> Charles Carter Lee referred to the great hall as "the saloon" in one of his tales about life at Stratford. Charles Carter Lee Papers, quoted in Calhoun, "Thomas Lee," p. 4699. Mark R. Wenger

opportunity to tarry at Tuckahoe, where an H-shaped house similar to Stratford dominates the scene. He wrote that the two wings of the house were united by a saloon that could "answer the two purposes of a cool retreat from the scorching and sultry heat of the climate, and of an occasional ballroom."<sup>37</sup> Isaac Weld was enjoying Harry Lee's hospitality in 1795--and he may have been thinking specifically of the central room at Stratford--when he wrote that "the hall, or saloon as it is called, is always a favourite apartment, during the hot weather, in a Virginia house, on account of the draught of air through it, and it is usually furnished similar to a parlour, with sofas, &c."<sup>38</sup>

Unlike the saloon or great hall, the rest of Stratford's interior sustained almost continuous alteration from the time it was built until about 1820. Then during the 1930s restoration, Fiske Kimball aggressively removed from Stratford's interior what he judged to be later accretions, replacing them with his own copies of Georgian and Federal design. The result, as recent analysts of paint and woodwork have concluded, are rooms partitioned and finished in ways that no eighteenth-century Lee would recognize.<sup>39</sup> Kimball's traced the gradual development of the central passage into the saloon in "The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Space," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture II, Camille Wells, editor, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), pp. 137-149.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Anburey, Travels through the Interior Parts of America (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1923), v. 2, p. 208..

<sup>38</sup> Isaac Weld, Travels through the States of North America and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada during the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797 (London: J. Stockdale, 1799), v. 1, p. 156.

<sup>39</sup> "Report by Phillips and Buchanan." The following discussion of changes in Stratford's form and use depends heavily on conclusions outlined by Charles Phillips and Paul Buchanan in this unpaginated manuscript.

restoration also obliterated the subtle variations in trim that often indicate how rooms were used and ranked as social space.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, surviving fragments of original and early architectural details permit some conclusions about the way Stratford was first laid out and subsequently altered.

Almost every surviving eighteenth-century house bears the marks of substantial change, but Stratford is extraordinary in that its remodelings began so soon after it was constructed and involved such substantial alterations to the patterns of circulation. Attempts to keep a house looking fashionable and prosperous are usually achieved through changes to architectural finish.<sup>41</sup> However, the early alterations at Stratford shifted the way people were encouraged or compelled to move through its interior space. Such changes indicate that the original plan of the house was unsatisfactory in some basic way and that the Lees felt challenged to make Stratford accommodate its functions comfortably and gracefully.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Using varied qualities of architectural finish to discern a "hierarchy" of social space is Edward Chappell's subject in "Looking at Buildings," Fresh Advice (November 1984), pp. i-vi.

<sup>41</sup> It was to achieve this end that Stratford received a general retrimming during the Federal period. Although Phillips and Buchanan date this Federal remodeling to the tenure of Lighthorse Harry Lee, my own view is that Henry Lee Jr. did the work. This conclusion is based on three observations. First, it is now clear that the general Federal remodeling and rebuilding of rural Virginia architecture--especially on the Northern Neck--was more a nineteenth-century than an eighteenth-century phenomenon. Second is my sense that Harry Lee was far too restless and far too distressed financially to attend to the tedious and expensive business of remodeling a house. Third is Henry Lee's access, after about 1815, to the McCarty inheritance and his clear intention, if I read the record right, to settle at Stratford for good.

<sup>42</sup> Among surviving old houses, most changes in patterns of circulation result from the construction of new passages and rooms.

As Stratford was first planned, the Lees and their social peers entered and departed from the house by way of the north and south central doorways. In the great hall they found not only a cool sitting room and an elegant ballroom, but also the passage through which they might gain access to the other main-story dwelling spaces. Four doorways opened from the great hall directly into the four main suites of rooms.<sup>43</sup> Each of these quadrants included a large and a small room--both with fireplaces--as well as a closet in one corner. These eight rooms and four closets ostensibly provided the Lees with numerous useful spaces, but the necessity of passing through the outer room in order to reach the inner room of each suite significantly reduced the range of practical options.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, in order to travel from one corner room to another, a member of the household was forced to intrude upon the activities of three intervening spaces.

When Stratford was first built, domestic servants and slaves were permitted much greater freedom of movement. Using the narrow, plainly finished side passages, they enjoyed independent access to the great hall and to seven of the eight adjacent living rooms. The enclosed winder stair in the east passage gave them direct communication with all of the ground-floor service rooms, and cupboards set into recesses in each of the four chimney stacks

What makes the changes in room use and accessibility at Stratford so unusual is that they were effected within the dwelling's original perimeter.

<sup>43</sup> This original feature of the house was first recognized by Paul Buchanan and Charles Phillips and subsequently discussed in "Report by Phillips and Buchanan."

<sup>44</sup> According to the 1984 Phillips and Buchanan report, the existence of original doorways in the framed partition walls between the main living rooms is still conjectural. If there was no original communication between each pair of rooms, the passages must always have been in use by the Lees.

offered convenient places to store the supplies and accoutrements associated with their duties. Through the east and west doorways, they could also move unhindered from the dwelling itself to the surrounding outbuildings. By contrast with the constraints placed on the Lees and their associates, members of Stratford's domestic staff could travel discreetly and without obstruction to almost any room in the house.<sup>45</sup>

The Lees could not have dwelt at Stratford for long before the obvious disparity of convenience in the two systems of domestic circulation began to annoy. Soon, the Lees themselves were apparently resorting to the east-west passages for access to the various rooms on the main floor. It also appears that the general flow of arrivals and departures began to shift from the north and south entrances to the doorway on the west end of the house. The numerous storage rooms on the ground floor of the dwelling itself demanded the presence of a path that was sufficiently wide and well established to accommodate loaded carts and wagons. Although the original approaches to Stratford are not entirely understood, it is obvious that before many years had passed, a service road to the west side of the house was beginning to find favor with more genteel traffic. Greetings and farewells at the west main-floor doorway necessarily increased the social importance of the west passage as well.

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<sup>45</sup> Dell Upton was the first to discuss how a Virginia gentry house and its surrounding landscape could accommodate overlapping but often entirely separate systems of circulation for the servant and the served--or the black and white--sectors of the plantation household. See "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Places: A Quarterly Journal of Environmental Design 2 (Winter 1985), pp. 59-72, reprinted in Robert Blair St. George, editor, Material Life in America, 1600-1860 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp. 357-370.

In time, the Lees accepted the side passages as the best means of getting about the house, and they directed carpenters to block the four doorways between the great hall and the flanking quadrants.<sup>46</sup> Although they gave the family an agreeable combination of flexibility and privacy, the passages proved to be very awkward components of Stratford's social space. Designed for use by servants, these passages were narrow, plainly finished, and illuminated by framed holes in the ceilings that exposed the roof structure to view.<sup>47</sup> By the standards of anyone who prized Stratford's more spacious and elegant aspects, the passages were embarrassingly drab paths of circulation. Moreover, they had to be shared with the household staff whose avenues of service the passages needed to remain. These shortcomings were probably what Philip Ludwell Lee had in mind when he showed guests a more conventional dwelling design and complained that "I should have been now living in a house like this . . . had not my father been persuaded by his wife to put up this very inferior dwelling, now over my head."<sup>48</sup>

That these were the original design problems and solutions at Stratford is suggested by subsequent alterations. Although the width of the side passages is confined by the flanking chimney structures, the Lees managed to give them a more spacious appearance by constructing new recessed entrances to each of the adjacent rooms. Replacing the four passage cupboards with arched and plastered niches contributed to the same effect.<sup>49</sup> Eventually,

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<sup>46</sup> Behind the doors, the workmen framed and finished shallow closets that remain in use today.

<sup>47</sup> These remarkable openings, which provided light to the passage from wide windows set up high between the chimneys, were first discussed in "Report by Phillips and Buchanan," 1984.

<sup>48</sup> Charles Carter Lee Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.



the ingenious but awkward skylights were sealed with plaster, and stylish new fanlighted doorways assumed their task of supplying the passages with light. Finally, the family acknowledged the increased importance of Stratford's west entrance in two significant ways. One was the addition of a west-facing porch with a semi-circular plan like that of the original or early portico on the north side of the house. A second change was the construction of a new interior staircase. Built into the northwest corner of the house, this Federal-period improvement permitted convenient arrivals and departures by way of the west main-floor passage and through the west ground-floor doorway.

Despite the survival of two room-by-room inventories, the eighteenth-century schemes of room use at Stratford are difficult to recover. At first, the 1758 inventory for "the Honorable Colo. Thomas Lee of Stratford" even looks as if it had been taken in some other house.<sup>50</sup> This desultory list includes only five sets of "chimney furniture" for the main floor there were originally eight fireplaces. Only one passage and one of the four passage cupboards are mentioned, and only three of the four known closets appear. Attempts to discern congruence between the document and the house are only frustrated by rigorous readings: the sense of the domestic space that this inventory describes is much more accessible when it is scanned with the same casual stance that apparently governed its creation.

The appraisers of Thomas Lee's possessions began their work

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<sup>49</sup> It is still not clear that these niches originally had shelving or cupboard doors.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Lee Inventory, pp. 77-78. It is consistent with Philip Ludwell Lee's reluctant settling of his father's estate that Thomas Lee's inventory was not recorded until eight years after his death, and it is impossible to determine when this list was actually taken.

in the parlor, the parlor closet, and the dining room. As two of the most formal entertaining rooms in most eighteenth-century Virginia houses, the parlor and the dining room would have functioned most compatibly in adjacent rooms.<sup>51</sup> While Stratford's great hall probably performed service as a dining room as well as a parlor for large groups or during hot weather, separate rooms with these designated functions were important components of a genteel household. Moreover, their generous fireplaces and more intimate scale would have been welcome advantages during the chilly months and for smaller gatherings. With the parlor closet, the parlor and dining room probably occupied one of the four quadrants on Stratford's main floor.

The appraisers then proceeded from the parlor-dining room suite to the hall, with its "2 couches . . . 12 chairs . . . a candeeler . . . [and] two walnut tables."<sup>52</sup> From there, they entered a second suite of rooms: the library, with its adjacent library closet, and the dressing room. In addition to the accoutrements for those functions that gave these rooms their names, both spaces contained beds and their furnishings. Since the 1758 inventory mentions no principal chamber, it appears that Thomas Lee thought of this entire quadrant as his chamber, with the gentlemanly pursuits of reading and fine dressing were as significant as those of retirement and sleep.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See Dell Upton, "The Virginia Parlor: The Henry Saunders House and Its Occupants," unpublished research report, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., 1981; Mark R. Wenger, "The Dining Room in Early Virginia," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture III, Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, editors, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), pp. 149-159.

<sup>52</sup> Thomas Lee Inventory, p. 77. It is significant that in traveling from the parlor-dining room suite to the library-dressing room suite, the appraisers passed through the great hall. This suggests that the inventory was taken before the great hall doors to the four quadrants were blocked.

Physical evidence supports the conclusion that the parlor-dining room quadrant and the library-dressing room quadrant occupied main-floor rooms of Stratford's east wing. The original position of the kitchen in the southeast dependency is one strong indication that the dining room was always in the east side of the house. The position of the original service stair in the east passage strengthens the probability. The original plans of the four quadrants offer further clues. The southeast suite is the only one of the four partitioned so that the small room could modify the original flow of traffic between the great hall and the large room. This apparent concern to restrict access suggests that the southeast corner room was intended for use as the chamber.<sup>54</sup> Thus the parlor-dining room suite probably occupied the northeast quadrant while the library-dressing room suite was positioned in the southeast quadrant.

Across the great hall in the west wing of the house, the appraisers found four rooms, each designated by color.<sup>55</sup> The "blew room" and the green room were apparently adjacent bedchambers, with relatively expensive sets of bedding and curtains as well as chairs for two or more arrangements of seating. There remained, for the final quadrant, the red room and the white room, both of which were furnished more cheaply and sparsely. Rather than list the apparently inconsequential furnishings of the red room, the appraisers noted that "the whole furniture" represented a little over

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<sup>53</sup> The 1770 inventory of Governor Botetourt's household in Williamsburg indicates that he used one room adjacent to his chamber for dressing and for storing his clothes. Another adjacent room served as his library. Barbara Carson, The Governor's Palace: The Williamsburg Residence of Virginia's Royal Governor (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1987), pp. 58-63.

<sup>54</sup> This observation is drawn from "Report by Phillips and Buchanan."

<sup>55</sup> Thomas Lee Inventory, pp. 77-78.

£8 in value. The white room, clearly one of the smaller rooms with a closet at one end, contained two bedsteads and some furniture that was apparently for the use of children.<sup>56</sup>

During Thomas Anburey's visit to Tuckahoe, he summarized the dwelling's arrangement of space in this way:

[I]t is in the form of an H, and has the appearance of two houses, joined by a large saloon; each wing has two stories, and [the whole house has] four large rooms on a floor; in one the family resides, and the other is reserved solely for visitors.<sup>57</sup>

It appears that the rooms on the main floor of Stratford were organized in a similar way. In the great hall and the east wing of the house were spaces for all of those functions that usually dominated the main story of early Virginia dwellings.<sup>58</sup> In the west wing were bedrooms for those Lee children who still lived at home and at least one suite of rooms where guests might stay.<sup>59</sup>

In many respects, Philip Ludwell Lee's inventory of 1776 is as challenging to interpret as is the document made after his father's

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<sup>56</sup> Thomas Lee Inventory, pp. 77-78.

<sup>57</sup> Anburey, Travels through Interior Parts of America, v. 2, p. 208.

<sup>58</sup> By the middle of the eighteenth century, the dining room, the chamber, and a sitting room--functions performed by the hall, parlor, or saloon--were the most common three spaces in any sizeable Virginia house. Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Winterthur Portfolio 17 (Summer/Autumn 1982) pp. 95-120, reprinted in Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, editors, Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), pp. 315-335.

<sup>59</sup> According to Paul Nagel, the four younger children--Francis Lightfoot, Alice, William, and Arthur Lee--were still living at Stratford when their father died. Nagel, Lees of Virginia, p. 67.

death. While the appraisers listed the eight sets of hearth tools that must have been present among Stratford's main-floor rooms, no closets or passages attracted notice. Furthermore, the contents of the kitchen, which was still located in the southeast dependency, are listed disconcertingly between those of the nursery and those of the hall. Finally, many of the room names that Philip Ludwell Lee's household assigned differ from those used during Thomas Lee's lifetime. They suggest that shifts in room function may have accompanied changes to the patterns of circulation that began during Philip Ludwell Lee's tenure.<sup>60</sup>

When the main rooms are matched by name or function with those of Thomas Lee's document, however, important similarities emerge. Principal among these is the continued treatment of the four quadrants as suites of related rooms, although the opening of the side passages to general circulation provided the Lees with independent access to seven of the eight main-floor rooms.<sup>61</sup> For practical reasons, the dining room was still located in the northeast quadrant, where it shared its Potomac River view with the "cherry tree room," the parlor with a new whimsical name. In the southeast quadrant, Philip Ludwell Lee had established his chamber. While early Virginia rooms of this designation usually served as a household's principal bedroom and most private sitting room, The Lees's chamber had no bed. Instead, a quantity of miscellaneous tools and instruments suggest that this chamber served as Philip Ludwell Lee's office. A mahogany bureau and clothes press indicate that he also withdrew to this room for dressing. If the next room to appear in the inventory was adjacent to the chamber, then the nursery was the second heated room in this southeast suite. While

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<sup>60</sup> Philip Ludwell Lee Inventory, pp. 173-175.

<sup>61</sup> After the doors leading from the great hall to each of the quadrants were blocked, the smaller room in the southeast suite became accessible only through the larger room.

it may have been here that the two Lee daughters slept--the nursery did contain one bedstead and two beds--other contents of the room suggest that its functions in 1776 were more closely related to those of the adjacent chamber office.<sup>62</sup>

West of the hall, where the various couches, tables, and chairs had been joined by a spinet, one quadrant was still occupied by the blue room and the green room, with their costly arrangements of furniture for sitting, dressing, and sleeping. Because the chamber was not in use as Stratford's principal bedroom, it is likely that one or both of these west rooms had become the private domain of Philip Ludwell Lee and his wife.<sup>63</sup> Across the passage, the white room remained an inexpensively furnished bedroom. Next door, accoutrements including two desks, a table, and several chairs permitted the school room to serve its designated function for the two Lee daughters. The additional presence of a bed and bedstead with "1 pr. red curtains and quilt" suggests that this was the red room renamed.<sup>64</sup>

Phillip Ludwell Lee's new designation for Stratford's parlor is a

<sup>62</sup> The nursery contained a clothes press full of household linen. There was also a desk and bookcase and three leather-bottom chairs. Philip Ludwell Lee Inventory, p. 174. A possible explanation for the disparity between the designations and contents of Philip Ludwell Lee's chamber and nursery is that the names date from the early years of Lee's marriage and parenthood while the furnishings represent changes made as the children grew older and Lee could indulge his desire to have a private suite for both business and personal uses. The principal flaw in this hypothesis is that Matilda and Flora Lee were both still young when their father died. Moreover, it is said that Lee's son Philip was born on the day of his death. Dill and Cheek, A Visit to Stratford, p. 43.

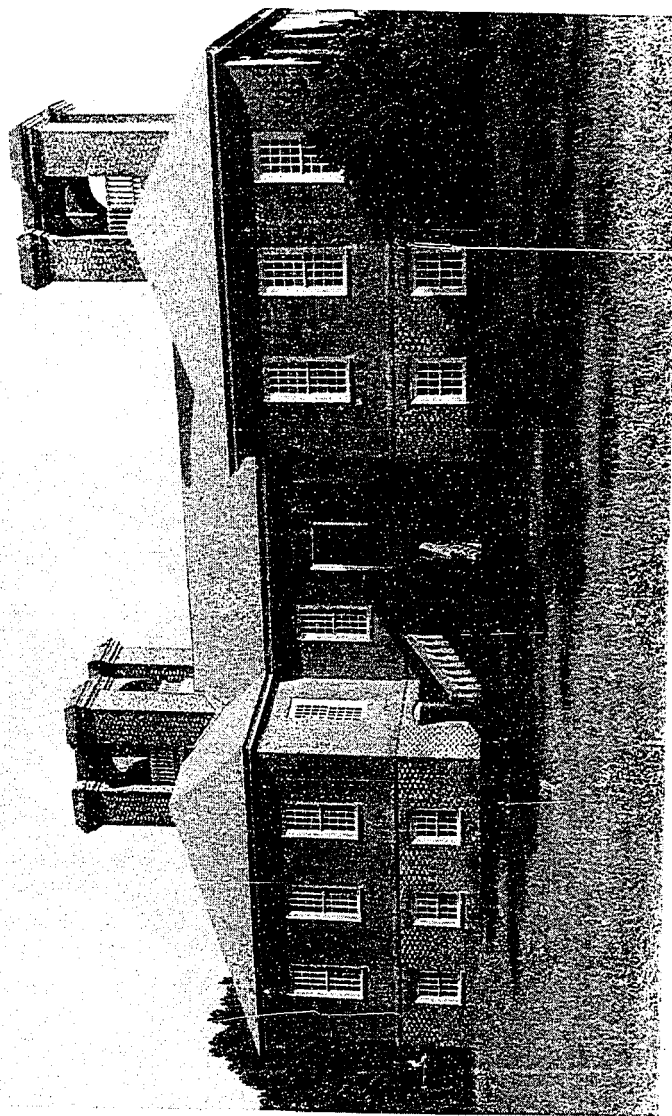
<sup>63</sup> The presence of one gold and two silver watches in the blue room may indicate that this was the main bedchamber. Philip Ludwell Lee Inventory, p. 174.

<sup>64</sup> Philip Ludwell Lee Inventory, pp. 173-175.

matter of special significance. While the term "cherry tree room" may have gained custom because the parlor was embellished with cherry paneling or with a design of cherries on fabric or wall paper, the name also had a family history. Depositions taken after the 1729 robbing and burning of Thomas Lee's house reveal that Machodoc had a cherry tree room as well. Witnesses had overheard one of the defendants in the case "talking about the cherry tree room [and] he was asked if cherrys grew on it." He replied "noe, but when he workt at Captain Lee's he was drinking syder with the servants and they told him there was such a room where the plates lay."<sup>65</sup> So it was that Thomas Lee's best room at Machodoc--the room where he kept his silver plate--was recalled in the renaming of Stratford's parlor. Like Thomas Lee's decision to rename the Clifts after his grandfather's English residence, this gesture indicates that as early as the 1750s, the Lees cultivated their identity as members of a family line. While the construction of the monumental house at Stratford had less to do with the family's sense of its own continuity than with Thomas Lee's appointment to the Virginia Council, it was in the Stratford household, among other places, that the Lees consciously shaped the achievements and traditions of generations past into a justification for their stance as a dynasty of Anglo-American elites.

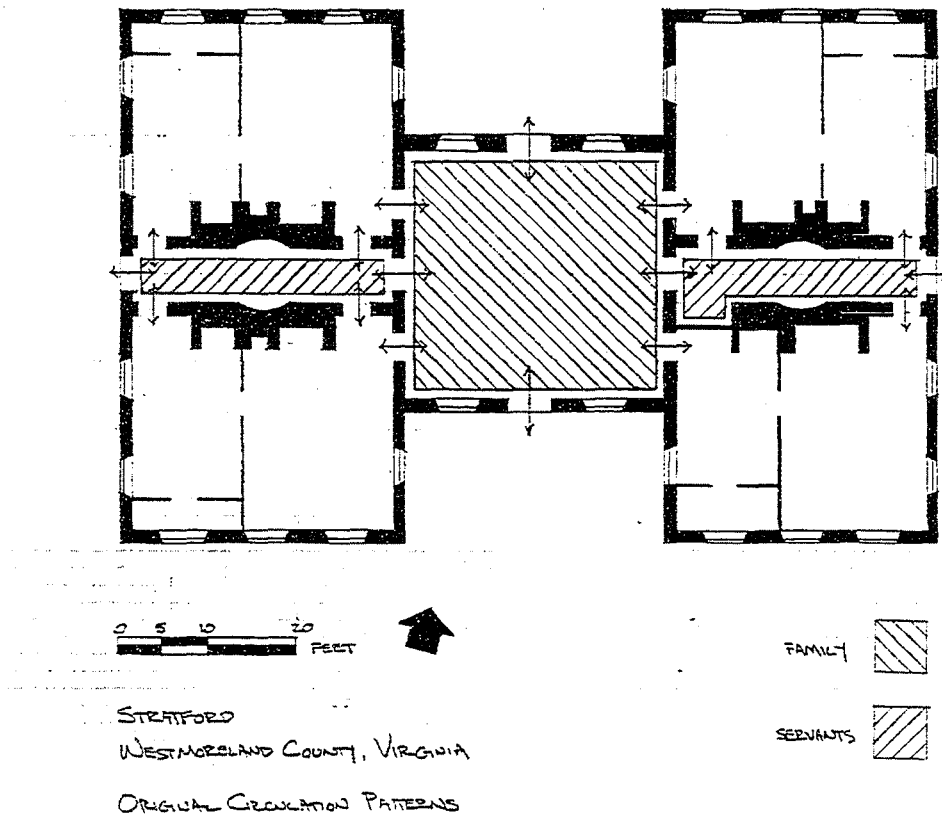
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<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Calhoun, "Thomas Lee," p. 4694.

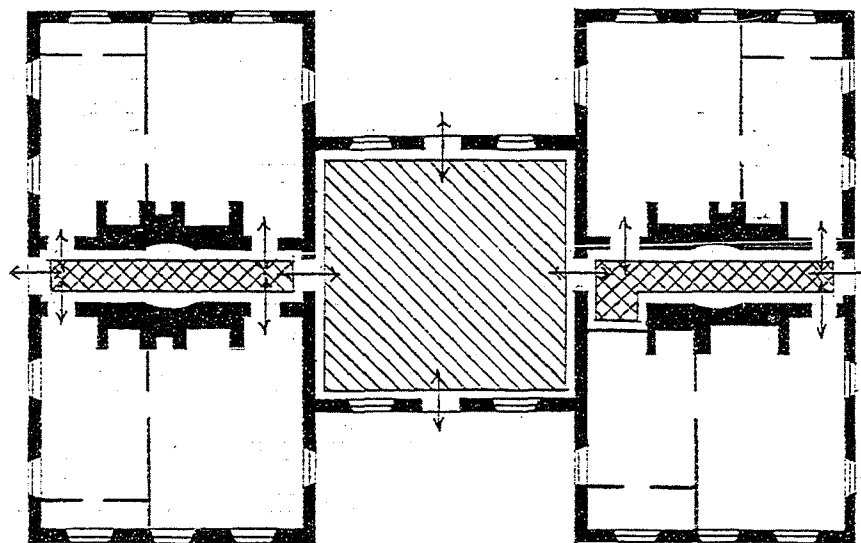


Stratford, Westmoreland County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)





Stratford, Diagram of Original Circulation System. (Drawing, Camille Wells.)



0 5 10 20  
FEET



FAMILY



FAMILY AND SERVANTS



STRATFORD  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY, VIRGINIA

ALTERED CIRCULATION PATTERNS

Stratford, Diagram of Revised Circulation System. (Drawing, Camille Wells.)

TWIFORD  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
COLONIAL BEACH SOUTH 7.5

Leedstown was located on the north shore of the Rappahannock River at a place where the estuary narrows dramatically to less than 200 yards in breadth, and watercraft on their way upstream must begin to navigate around a series of intrusive marshes. Situated where the channel runs close against the north river bank, Leedstown was an obvious place for prudent pilots of larger vessels to end their journey. In 1730, the General Assembly established a tobacco inspection warehouse on the site.<sup>1</sup> Twelve years later the energetic comings and goings about the warehouse led the General Assembly to authorize the laying out of a town "called by the name of Leeds."<sup>2</sup> Almost nothing survives of this early port village, but two colonial dwellings still face south toward the Leedstown landing from their hilltop sites. One of these houses is Twiford. Like nearby Walnut Hill, it was built in the third quarter of the

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<sup>1</sup> William Waller Hening, editor, The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia . . . (1819-1823; reprint: Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press for the Jamestown Foundation of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1969), v. 4, p. 267. When the tobacco inspection warehouse was established, the landing was known as Bray's Church, a reference to a nearby church under the administration of Hanover Parish in King George County. Until 1778 Leedstown was also located in King George County. In that year surveyors reported to the Westmoreland County Court the results of their efforts to establish a new line between King George and Westmoreland Counties "in obedience to an act of the General Assembly of the State of Virginia" dated October, 1777. Westmoreland County Fiduciary Records 6, p. 100; Hening, editor, Statutes, v. 9, p. 432.

<sup>2</sup> Hening, editor, Statutes, v. 5, p. 193.

eighteenth century by a merchant-planter who apparently made the best of his living in Leedstown.

The ridge where Twiford stands was part of a tract that John Orr owned during the 1760s. Orr was a Scot who had come from Whitehaven to establish himself as a merchant at Leedstown. He married the daughter of a local planter in 1761, and it may have been at about the same time that he acquired the Twiford tract as part of a larger land purchase from Thomas Vivian. In 1762, Orr sold about half of the property to Thomas Jett, a fellow Leedstown merchant.<sup>3</sup> In addition to several hundred acres of land, what Orr and Jett divided between them were the two highest elevations between Leedstown on the Rappahannock River and Mattox Creek on the Potomac River.<sup>4</sup> Subsequent owners of these prominent dwelling sites would praise them as among the few spots on the Northern Neck where both rivers are in view.

During the 1760s both Orr and Jett set about developing their adjacent tracts of land into resident plantations, complete with substantial new dwellings and outbuildings. But at about the time Twiford and its surrounding plantation improvements were complete, John Orr found himself in financial trouble. As one strategy to manage his debts, he conveyed the Twiford plantation in trust to his neighbor Thomas Jett and to William Bernard, a prominent Westmoreland County lawyer. By 1769 Jett and Bernard were forced to announce that Orr's plantation would be auctioned for the benefit

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<sup>3</sup> David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), p. 19. This sequence of events is based only in part on Eaton's findings. It is a matter of conjecture that Orr also acquired the Twiford land when he bought the Walnut Hill land from Thomas Vivian.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Jett's tract became Walnut Hill. His house site is about 190 feet above sea level. Twiford stands on a nearby hill that is about 167 feet above sea level. See the entry for Walnut Hill elsewhere in this catalog.

of his creditors. In a Virginia Gazette advertisement, the trustees recommended the tract of 440 acres as "pleasantly situated, and commands an agreeable prospect of Rappahannock and Potowmack rivers, near one half of it enclosed, and is very good land." Of the buildings, Jett and Bernard noted Twiford itself, "a very genteel and commodious dwelling-house 56 by 32, with four brick chimnies and a good cellar." There was, moreover, "every convenient outhouse, a garden and yard paved in, the whole finished within a few years, and in good taste."<sup>5</sup>

Although originally scheduled for August, the auction of Twiford was delayed until December of 1769.<sup>6</sup> Apparently, Colin Reddock placed the highest bid for the house and its plantation. In any case, it was Reddock who sold the tract to Thomas Hodge in 1774.<sup>7</sup> Hodge settled his family on the site and lived there himself until at least 1779.<sup>8</sup> By 1782, however, Molly Hodge was counted

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<sup>5</sup> Bernard and Jett advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 6 July 1769, p. 4, c. 1. Twiford actually measures about 55 by 33 feet.

<sup>6</sup> Bernard and Jett advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 14 December 1769, p. 4, c. 3.

<sup>7</sup> This purchase is described in the deed by which Thomas Hodge's widow and sons sold Twiford to George Fitzhugh. Hodge to Fitzhugh, 14 August 1797, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 19, pp. 333-335. It is said that John Orr left for Loudon County, where he restructured his affairs. Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Most local histories of Twiford identify Thomas Hodge as the builder of the house, but it is clear that the house was standing by 1774. Henry R. Eubank, Touring Historyland: The Authentic Book of the Historic Northern Neck of Virginia (Colonial Beach, Virginia: Northern Neck Association, 1934), p. 35. Thomas Hodge was still living in 1779, when he was named to the vestry of Washington Parish. William Meade, Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1857), v. 2, p. 186.

responsible for taxes on her deceased husband's 1261 acres of Westmoreland County land.<sup>9</sup>

The house that John Orr built and Thomas Hodge acquired is a wood-framed and weatherboarded structure built to one full story with an upper half-story sheltered beneath a clipped-gable roof.<sup>10</sup> The house is set on a Flemish-bond foundation with sets of interior and exterior brick chimneys built onto the east and west gable ends. As is the case at Kirnan, the varying chimney designs suggest that Twiford was built in sections, but continuity in the wall framing indicates that the house is the result of a single building campaign. Twiford's long elevations both have centered and sidelighted doorways flanked on each side by symmetrically arranged pairs of windows.

Inside the house, a wide passage provides access to four main-floor rooms of varying size. This passage is entirely unobstructed, for the stair to the upper floor was framed into the dwelling's northwest quadrant. Much of Twiford's interior finish dates from an extensive restoration completed by the current owners around 1972. This restoration involved a quantity of interior trim salvaged from other dwellings built during the colonial and early national periods. Despite these accretions, it is still possible to infer some sense of how Twiford's interior was originally organized.

The largest room is positioned in the southwest corner of the house. When Twiford was newly completed, this room and the central passage were the only spaces to have raised-panel woodwork installed below molded chair rails. The southwest room was further distinguished with an overmantel composed of raised panels flanked by fluted pilasters and surmounted by a molded cornice.<sup>11</sup> This

<sup>9</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1782, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia. The Hodges ranked among the top twenty wealthiest landholders in the county.

<sup>10</sup> A photograph of Twiford appears in Chapter 3.

dramatic feature must have been among those which Thomas Jett and William Bernard had in mind when they described the house as "very genteel . . . and in good taste."<sup>12</sup> The fashionable woodwork also signals the "rank" of the southwest room as the most public and formal entertaining space in the house, but it does not indicate how the room was used.<sup>13</sup>

Although the dining room was gaining popularity during the third quarter of the eighteenth century as the finest and most expensively finished room in a planter's house, Orr apparently had other intentions for his new dwelling.<sup>14</sup> At Twiford, it is the east end of the house that is arranged with the closets, side doorway, and convenient access to the cellar that would have made elaborate meals both graceful and convenient. Positioned as it is so far from

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<sup>11</sup> The woodwork that now embellishes this largest of Twiford's rooms is a modern copy of the original interior finish. In 1935 this eighteenth-century paneling was taken down and reinstalled--with some changes made to the fit and the proportions--in the President's Room at the Westmoreland County Museum in Montross. In its present location, the Twiford paneling has been stripped and sealed. Because it is made of pine, it was almost certainly intended to be painted. The paneling in the passage at Twiford is original.

<sup>12</sup> Bernard and Jett advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon) 6 July 1769, p. 4, c. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Discerning the "hierarchy" of social space by comparing interior woodwork is a technique laid out by Edward Chappell in "Looking at Buildings," Fresh Advices (November 1984), pp. i-vi.

<sup>14</sup> The dining room was originally the largest and most expensively finished room at Thomas Jett's Walnut Hill, which was built at about the same time as Twiford. For more on the rise of the colonial planter's dining room, see Mark R. Wenger, "The Dining Room in Early Virginia," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture III, Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, editors, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), pp. 149-159.

this service end of the house, the southwest room was apparently always intended for use as a formal sitting room. John Orr--and Thomas Hodge after him--probably called this space the "hall" or the "parlor." Directly across the passage, which was wide and light enough to accommodate comfortable, well ventilated summertime living, was the next largest and most elaborately finished space at Twiford. It was this southeast room that Orr planned to use for dining.<sup>15</sup>

Behind the dining room, in the northeast quadrant of the house, Orr probably established his chamber, a room equipped with the household's best bedroom furniture as well as tables and chairs for more private social gatherings.<sup>16</sup> The fourth room, which shares the northwest quadrant of the main story with the staircase, may have been called a "closet" by the Orr and Hodge households, but it has always been sufficiently well illuminated and heated--with its own fireplace--to serve as a comfortable bedroom or office. Upstairs there were three additional fireplaces that provided the household with at least three more heated bedrooms. The rooms in this upper half-story were illuminated by Twiford's original hipped-roof dormers.

In 1797 Molly Hodge and her three grown sons sold Twiford and all the rest of their Westmoreland County property to George

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<sup>15</sup> Like the cellars of most big eighteenth-century dwellings, Twiford's probably served as cool and dry storage space for food and beverages. Richard Henry Lee, for example, kept an extensive stock of wine in his cellar at Chantilly. See the entry of Chantilly elsewhere in this catalog. The original entrance to Twiford's cellar, which occupies only the space beneath the two east rooms of the house, was by way of a bulkhead entrance on the east gable end. It was thus positioned near the side entrance to the dining room, the storage closets on the east end of the house, and--presumably--the path to a detached kitchen, as one component of a complex facility for elaborate dining.

<sup>16</sup> This room has become Twiford's modern kitchen.



Fitzhugh for £1704.<sup>17</sup> Fitzhugh, in turn, sold the Hodges's land to MacKenzie Beverley in 1810.<sup>18</sup> Beverley made Twiford his residence and in 1815, he sustained an additional personal property tax because he was among fifty-one Westmoreland County landholders to own a dwelling worth over \$500.<sup>19</sup>

In 1817 Beverley decided to sell Twiford. Composing a notice for Fredericksburg's Virginia Herald, he wrote that the plantation contained about a thousand acres, "more than 500 of which are Rappahannock flat land, extending to the little town of Leeds; the remainder of the land is generally in woods, except that portion of it that surrounds the dwelling." In a discussion of the plantation improvements, Beverley suggested that he had rebuilt Twiford's outbuildings and that he kept the dwelling itself in good repair. He had also established or maintained an inviting array of plantings.

There are 800 thriving apple trees, with a well selected collection of garden fruits. The house is large, commodious, well fitted up, and in excellent order; the garden highly improved, and the out houses all new and very convenient; there is also a well of water adjoining the kitchen.<sup>20</sup>

By 1817, Virginians understood that Tidewater residents were susceptible to certain ailments that did not afflict their neighbors

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<sup>17</sup> Hodge to Fitzhugh, pp. 333-335.

<sup>18</sup> Fitzhugh to Beverley, 5 August 1810, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 22, pp. 109-111.

<sup>19</sup> Westmoreland County Personal Property Tax Records, 1815, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia. Twiford was appraised at \$2000. As a matter of comparison, Stratford was considered worth \$3500. Peckatone was, like Twiford, valued at \$2000. Walnut Hill was valued at \$1500. See the entries for Stratford, Peckatone, and Walnut Hill elsewhere in this catalog.

<sup>20</sup> Beverley advertisement, Virginia Herald, 10 September 1817, p. 1, c. 3.

west of the fall line. They also had come to realize that low grounds--especially those near still or sluggish water--were particularly unhealthy dwelling sites.<sup>21</sup> Beverley thus took pains to emphasize that Twiford was sufficiently elevated to insure the well-being of inhabitants who wanted to enjoy all of the scenic, commercial, and edible advantages of a riverside domain.

The situation is high, healthy, and picturesque; from the south door, you overlook the rich scenery of the Rappahannock for a great extent; and from the north, you have a fine view of the Potomac, whitened by the rapidly-increasing commerce of the District of Columbia. For the maintenance of a rich table, no place can surpass this residence; as it enjoys all the productions of both rivers and venison, fish, wild fowl, and oysters, in profusion; nor do those advantages pall upon the appetite in consequence of the climate, for the situation is high and salubrious, affording, it is confidently thought, as much health as is enjoyed on any residence beyond the mountains in the state.<sup>22</sup>

Beverley obviously worded his expensive newspaper advertisement for an audience unfamiliar with the Northern Neck, so he may have

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<sup>21</sup> Throughout the colonial period, malaria was chief among the seasonal maladies that afflicted Tidewater Virginians. See Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, "Of Agues and Fevers: Malaria in the Early Chesapeake," William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series, 33 (January 1976), pp. 31-61. In the late summer of 1790, Thomas Lee Shippen was able to escape illness during a protracted visit to relatives in Richmond and Westmoreland County by "taking a dose of bark every day." The servant who accompanied him was not so fortunate. Letter of Thomas Lee Shippen to William Shippen, Jr., 29 September 1790, Shippen Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

<sup>22</sup>Beverley advertisement, Virginia Herald, 10 September 1817, p. 1, c. 3.

been surprised when a member of the Hungerford family in Westmoreland County offered to buy Twiford. In 1811 John W. Hungerford had joined his uncle and brother in the buying up of land in and around Leedstown.<sup>23</sup> When he purchased Beverley's plantation in 1818, he made Twiford the dwelling seat of substantial landholdings.<sup>24</sup>

John W. Hungerford lived at Twiford for the rest of his life. When he died in 1850, his executors reported that his substantial wealth included fifty-eight slaves worth over \$17,000. His neighbors and relatives also owed him nearly \$4000 in sums n outstanding loans.<sup>25</sup> Although Hungerford's executors did not list the contents of his household by the rooms in which they were found, something of their progress through Twiford is apparent from the sequence of accoutrements.

The appraisers began in a parlor or sitting room which was furnished with a sofa, a pair of rocking chairs, and a dozen cane-bottom chairs distributed around a "centre table."<sup>26</sup> From there,

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<sup>23</sup> The lots of Leedstown had vanished into undifferentiated farmland by 1830. Virginia W. Sherman, "Leeds Town and the Leeds Town Resolves," in Walter Biscoe Norris, Jr., editor, Westmoreland County, Virginia 1653-1983 (Montross, Virginia: Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors, 1983), p. 617.

<sup>24</sup> Beverley to Hungerford, 2 January 1818, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 23, p. 441. it may have been Hungerford who gave the house and its tract the name "Twiford." It does not appear in any primary source until the period of his ownership. Westmoreland County Land Tax Records 1830-1850, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>25</sup> Inventory of John W. Hungerford Estate, 24 February 1851, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 21, pp. 37-40.

<sup>26</sup> The presence of this center table suggests that the Hungerford household had a fashionable Victorian parlor. Because the house still contained no kitchen, the room functions established when Twiford was built probably still prevailed.

they proceeded to the dining room, where a side board, a set of dining tables, and dozen windsor chairs dominated the scene. The passage was furnished for cool summer seating with two settees and a half-dozen chairs. Then the appraisers began a long list of items such as beds, chests, trunks, and chairs that signify their progress into Twiford's bedrooms. Discrete sets of window curtains and washstands indicate that there were four of these, although only three of them were equipped with hearth tools.<sup>27</sup>

According to Westmoreland County tax lists, John Hungerford's estate remained unsettled for over thirty years.<sup>28</sup> In 1884, a court-appointed commissioner conveyed 265 acres of Hungerford's property, including "all of a parcel known as Twiford," to D. H. Griffith.<sup>29</sup> In 1919, Griffith's executor sold Twiford to H. W. Coates.<sup>30</sup> The property changed hands several times more before the modern resident owners bought it in 1959.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The listing of only three sets of bedroom fireplace equipment means that two of Twiford's hearths had no tools for starting and tending a fire. This suggests that only three bedrooms--perhaps the two north rooms on the main floor and one of the rooms above--were used during the winter. Hungerford Inventory, pp. 37-40.

<sup>28</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1850-1885, Westmoreland County Clerk's Office, Montross, Virginia.

<sup>29</sup> Lewis to Griffith, 25 April 1884, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 51, pp. 292-293.

<sup>30</sup> Griffith to Coates, 15 August 1919, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 81, p. 104.

<sup>31</sup> James E. Gouldman to John and Mildred Boddie, 16 October 1959, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 168, p. 354.

WALNUT HILL  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
COLONIAL BEACH SOUTH 7.5

Built on the highest point of land in the western part of Westmoreland County, Walnut Hill is one of the few spots on the Northern Neck from which it is possible to see both of the great Tidewater rivers that create this peninsula. Like nearby Twiford, Walnut Hill was the eighteenth-century seat of several planters who had commercial interests in Leedstown. This is perhaps the reason Walnut Hill faces south toward the site of this colonial port town on the Rappahannock River.

Walnut Hill is a low wood-framed and weatherboarded structure with a gable roof that once had clipped ends.<sup>1</sup> It is set on a full cellar with perimeter and partition walls made of English-bond brickwork that changes to a Flemish-bond pattern above ground level. Each of the three original chimneys was made of dark red bricks laid up in Flemish bond with a single pair of beveled shoulders set low in the structure. The resulting tall, square stacks must have given the house a striking profile.<sup>2</sup> Although the facade of Walnut Hill is five bays wide, the north side of the house is punctuated by only three bays. Both of these elevations have centered entrances that open into opposite ends of a wide off-center

<sup>1</sup> Other Westmoreland County houses with this detail of roof construction are the Hague, Kirnan, and Twiford. See the entries for these houses elsewhere in this catalog.

<sup>2</sup> The character of these original chimneys survives on old photographs, but only the lower half of the original west chimney is still standing. The upper part of this chimney was rebuilt during the nineteenth century with seven-course common-bond brickwork. The two east chimneys were pulled down during the 1970s and replaced with one modern chimney. Interview with Ann Flemer, 27 June 1989.

passage. The plan of the main floor includes two large rooms to the east and two smaller rooms to the west of the passage. This passage and the room in the southeast corner are both finished with molded and raised paneling below the level of the chair rail. The southeast room is the largest in the house and its built-in paneled and glazed corner cabinet suggests that this was originally Walnut Hill's dining room. If the other rooms of the house were organized according to formulas common on the Northern Neck, then the smaller room in the southwest quadrant was the hall. Behind the dining room in the northeast corner of the house was the chamber. The northwest room was originally accessible only from the southwest room, and it never had a fireplace. It may have served as an office, a library, or perhaps as a lodging room where clerks and trademen might settle for the night. It might also have accommodated all of these functions--in addition to some general household storage--with the simple designation of "closet."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> No inventory has been discovered for Walnut Hill. This conjecture is based on the increasing social importance in gentry houses, after about 1750, of the passage and dining room. There is also the common appearance in surviving eighteenth-century Virginia houses, of built-in case furniture in the original dining room. Once this space is placed, the other overwhelmingly prevalent functions for first-story rooms are those of a general sitting room--the hall or parlor--and those of a principal bedroom--the chamber. The uses to which the household put the fourth unheated room are the most speculative. See Mark R. Wenger, "The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Space," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture II, Camille Wells, editor, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), pp. 137-149; Mark R. Wenger, "The Dining Room in Early Virginia," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture III, Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, editors, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), pp. 149-159; Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Winterthur Portfolio 17 (Summer/Autumn 1982), pp. 95-119, reprinted in Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, editors,

Before the eighteenth century had ended, two one-story gable-roofed wings had been added onto the southeast and southwest corners of the house.<sup>4</sup> Each of these one-room additions has a separate gable-end chimney that was designed to resemble the dwelling's original chimneys. Set about 4 feet forward of Walnut Hill's original south plane, the wings framed the space for a shed-roofed porch that was built to shelter the entire facade of the house. When they were first constructed, the only access to these two additional rooms was by way of doorways that opened off this "portico." Their original function as auxiliary sleeping space is suggested by the fact that the two upstairs rooms in the original part of the house did not have fireplaces.<sup>5</sup>

The early history of Walnut Hill is difficult to discover because the house stood in King George County until 1778.<sup>6</sup> Sometime

Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture  
(Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), pp. 315-335.

<sup>4</sup> That these two wings were added is indicated by seams and jogs in the cellar brickwork where the original bulkhead entrance was built into the foundation of the east wing. That these additions were built before the end of the eighteenth century is suggested by their wrought-nailed fabric, the design of their chimneys, and their presence in a drawing made of the house on an 1805 insurance policy. Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia Policy No. 766, 14 December 1805, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>5</sup> The long porch is described as a "portico 44 by 8 feet" in Mutual Assurance Society Policy No. 766.

<sup>6</sup> Virginia's General Assembly authorized the creating of a new line between King George and Westmoreland Counties in October of 1777. Walnut Hill, which had been located in King George County, was in Westmoreland County thereafter. Unfortunately, King George County records survive only in fragments. William Waller Hening, editor, The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia... (1819-1823; reprint: Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press for the Jamestown Foundation of the Commonwealth

before his death in 1694, William Ball patented the land where Walnut Hill was later built. He left the property by will to his sons Joseph and George Ball.<sup>7</sup> The heirs of these two men sold the tract, reckoned at 715 acres, to Thomas Vivian in two conveyances dated 1747 and 1748.<sup>8</sup> Vivian eventually sold the land to John Orr, a Scot who, like Vivian, made his living as a merchant in Leedstown.<sup>9</sup> In 1762 Orr sold the Walnut Hill tract to Thomas Jett, yet a third Leedstown merchant. Jett served as both justice of the peace and sheriff of King George County, and like Thomas Vivian before him, he was also a vestryman for Hanover Parish.<sup>10</sup> It is probably Jett who built the original section of Walnut Hill during the third quarter of the eighteenth century.<sup>11</sup> In 1783 Thomas Jett conveyed to his son William Storke Jett "one full half of all my lands in my possession."<sup>12</sup> He died two years later, leaving his only son and heir in full possession of 1444 acres of Westmoreland County of Virginia, 1969), v. 9, p. 432.

<sup>7</sup> David W. Eaton, Historical Atlas of Westmoreland County, Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1942), p. 63.

<sup>8</sup> William and Sarah Ball Hardin sold 515 acres to Vivian in 1747. George Ball sold him the remaining two hundred acres the following year. Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p. 63.

<sup>9</sup> Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> Eaton, Atlas of Westmoreland County, p. 19; William Meade, Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1857), v. 2, p. 186.

<sup>11</sup> This conjecture is based on some similarities in the design and construction of Walnut Hill and Twiford, which was advertised as "lately built" in 1769. Bernard and Jett advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 6 July 1769, p. 4, c. 1. It was also not until after mid-century that wealthy planters began to favor high ground that was sometimes located some distance from navigable water for their dwelling sites.

<sup>12</sup> Jett to Jett, 10 June 1783, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 23, p. 372.



land.<sup>13</sup>

Storke Jett probably added the wings to Walnut Hill shortly after he became master of the house. They were in place by 1805, when he insured the dwelling against fire for \$2600. This policy shows that the Jett household ate meals prepared in a "wooden kitchen 1 story high 24 by 16 feet" that was sited about 75 feet from the dwelling itself. Flanking this kitchen were two smaller structures--a smokehouse and a dairy. About 300 feet northwest of the house was a "wooden stable" that was an exceptional 72 feet long. Jett insured this building for \$300.<sup>14</sup>

In 1817 William Storke Jett determined to sell "the lands on which I reside." Writing a newspaper announcement to attract potential buyers, he characterized the improvements on his dwelling plantation as . . .

very considerable, consisting of a large and convenient dwelling house, stables, granary, kitchen, smoke-house, dairy, and all other necessary out houses, in good repair . . . The dwelling house is situated on a high ridge, commanding a view, both of the Potomack and Rappahannock rivers, distant from the former about 5 miles, and from the latter 2 miles--and no seat in the lower country is considered more healthy than the same.<sup>15</sup>

Jett estimated that the Walnut Hill tract contained about five hundred acres, only about a hundred of which were in cultivation. Most of his land was composed of "good forest land, well covered

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<sup>13</sup> This quantity of land placed Jett among the twenty-five richest men in the county. Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1782-1786, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>14</sup> Mutual Assurance Society Policy No. 766.

<sup>15</sup> Jett advertisement, Virginia Herald 18 June 1817, p. 3, c. 3.

with pine, cedar, oak, chestnut, and hickory." Jett could keep so much of his dwelling tract in picturesque woodland because he owned a "nearly adjoining" quarter of six hundred acres where "barns, stables, corn-houses, orchards, overseers houses, &c." made more extensive agriculture both possible and profitable.<sup>16</sup>

If Jett received attractive offers for his Westmoreland County lands, he refused them. The property remained in his hands and eventually descended to his heir Charles C. Jett.<sup>17</sup> Though he made his home in King George County, Charles Jett kept Walnut Hill until 1870, when he sold it to Carolinus Turner. After Turner's death in 1876 Walnut Hill became the property of his wife Susan A. Turner, who sold it in 1885. The buyers were Andrew Flemer and four of his brothers, German immigrants then living in the vicinity of Washington, D. C.<sup>18</sup>

Apparently, only Andrew and Louis Flemer moved to Westmoreland County to farm their newly acquired 584 acres of land. For a time, both brothers lived with their families at Walnut Hill, and during that period, both of the one-story wings were converted to kitchens. The Flemers made other changes to the house as well. They replaced the weatherboard siding with wood shingles, they framed out the clipped planes of the dwelling's gable ends, and they built a large central dormer onto the south side of the roof. This addition gave the house a third upstairs bedroom. The Flemers were newcomers to the Northern Neck when they arrived at the end

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<sup>16</sup> Jett advertisement, Virginia Herald 18 June 1817, p. 3, c. 3.

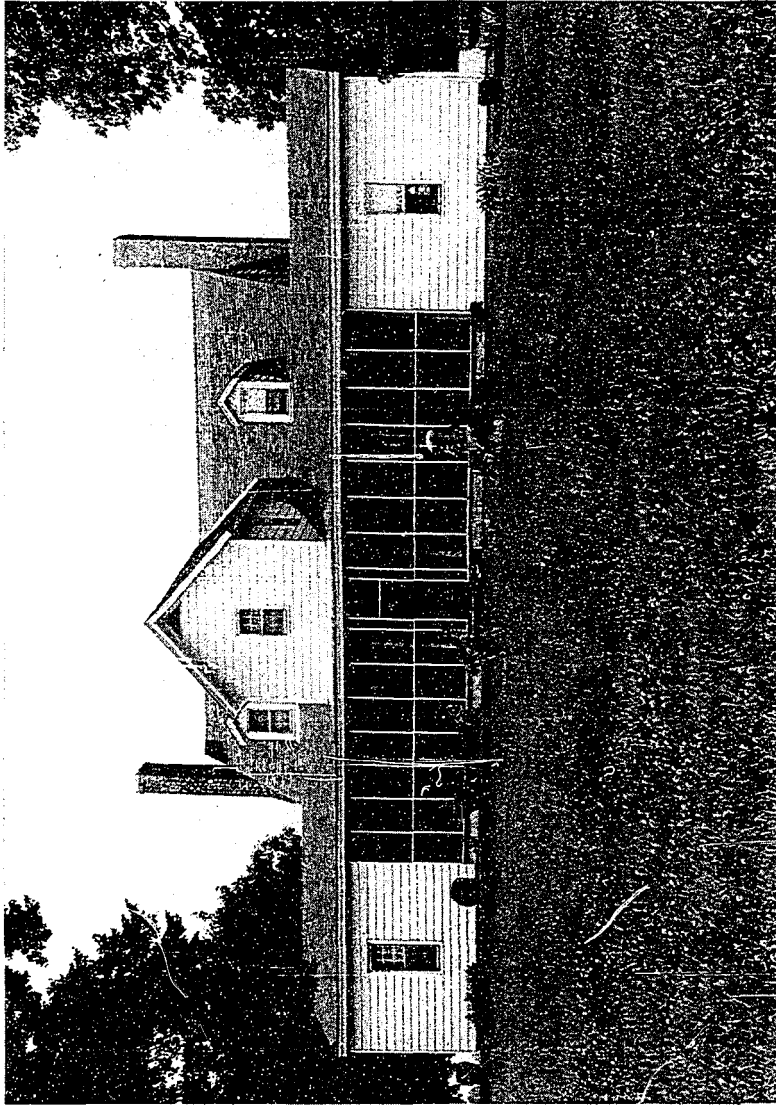
<sup>17</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1815-1870, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>18</sup> This sequence of events before 1876 is outlined in Division of Carolinus Turner Estate, 15 February 1877, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 42, pp. 127-128, 130-131. Susan A. Turner to J. A. Henry, J. Adolphus, William, Louis, and Andrew Flemer, 7 September 1885, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 46, p. 38. Andrew Flemer's heirs who own Walnut Hill today.

of the nineteenth century, but they set about establishing a permanent home at Walnut Hill. The farm eventually descended to Andrew Flemer's son and grandson, the Lewis C. Flemers Sr. and Jr. Today, the property is owned by Ann Flemer and her son Charles Flemer.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Flemer Interview, 27 June 1989.



Walnut Hill, Westmoreland County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)

WILTON  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
KINSALE 7.5

Wilton is a substantial two-story brick house that was probably constructed during the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Located about a half-mile southwest of the Potomac River, the house is sited on the relatively low ground that surrounds the salty, muddy water of Jackson Creek.

The brickwork of Wilton is laid in Flemish bond with a regular pattern of glazed headers above the level of the quarter-round molded watertable. The hipped roof has a modillioned cornice. The north and south elevations of the house each have five bays, and all of the openings are embellished with rubbed brick surrounds and segmental arches. The plan of the house involves a central passage flanked on the west side by two rooms and on the east side by a single room that is as deep as the house itself.

Unlike most brick houses of the colonial period, Wilton has exterior chimneys with beveled ramps that emphasize the level of the second-story fireplaces as well as the plane of the eaves. This may be because the builders wanted to enhance with varied planes the lively effect created by selectively rubbed and glazed bricks. It may also be because Wilton appears to have been constructed in part on the foundation of a smaller, older structure. Beneath the passage and west rooms of the house is a shallow cellar with slots in the brick walls where once rested the ends of an earlier set of joists.

Wilton has sustained at least three periods of alteration. During the first half of the nineteenth century, almost all of the original interior woodwork was replaced with Federal-style trim. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, the house was again

remodeled.<sup>1</sup> All the windows were glazed with the existing four-over-four double-hung sash and the east room received new window and door surrounds with Greek Revival profiles. By far the most substantial changes were made to the first-floor plan of the house. At the expense of the central passage, the northwest room was widened and a china closet was added. This entailed, among other things, the restructuring of the staircase. The most recent set of alterations have occurred during the tenure of the present owner, who has restored the original plan and introduced some Federal-period woodwork salvaged from other early houses. Over the centuries, a series of one-bay porches have sheltered both the north and south doorways. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, a one-story wood-framed wing--many times altered and occasionally enlarged--has provided the Wilton household with an attached kitchen and pantry as well as secondary sleeping rooms.

The land on which Wilton stands was part of a thousand-acre tract granted first to William Hockaday in 1653 and then to Thomas Gerrard in 1662.<sup>2</sup> Gerrard lived on this tract himself and local tradition maintains that he called his plantation both "Gerard's Reserve" in his own honor and "Machodoc," a reference to the Algonquian Indians whose settlements he and his fellow colonists were beginning to displace.<sup>3</sup> By 1737, five hundred acres of

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<sup>1</sup> The date of this renovation is drawn from Mary Willoughby Brown Howe, "This I Remember," an unpublished memoir written in 1939 and in the possession of the Brown family of Westmoreland County.

<sup>2</sup> The date of the grants and identity of the patentees appears in Robert Eskridge to Richard Jackson, 6 June 1738, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 8, p. 338.

<sup>3</sup> Harry Lee Arnest III and Alice Preston Moore, "A Survey of Period Architecture," Westmoreland County, Virginia, 1653-1983, Walter Biscoe Norris, Jr., editor, (Montross, Virginia: Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors, 1983), p. 273. Stephen R. Potter, "An

Gerrard's patent had made their way through several instruments into the hands of Dr. Robert Eskridge who lived in adjacent Northumberland County. The backbone of this smaller tract was the hundred-acre plantation called "Machotic Quarter" or "Gerrard's Neck" that Eskridge had inherited from his father.<sup>4</sup>

In 1738, Robert Eskridge advertised his Westmoreland County quarter in the Virginia Gazette. He described the land he intended to sell as "lying on Potowmack River," and improved "with an overseer's house, quarter, and three large tobacco-houses, a good orchard, well wooded, watered, &c."<sup>5</sup> Within two months, Eskridge had found a buyer for the land. Richard Jackson, a Westmoreland County merchant, purchased the tract for £325.<sup>6</sup>

Jackson lived on the plantation until his death in 1767, and he was almost certainly the builder of the house now known as "Wilton."<sup>7</sup> Purchasing the Machodoc Quarter for a dwelling plantation, he probably would have found the standing overseer's house decidedly inadequate.<sup>8</sup> The brickwork of Wilton is also

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Ethnohistorical Examination of Indian Groups in Northumberland County, Virginia: 1608-1719," (M. A. Thesis: University of North Carolina, 1976), p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> The transactions are outlined in Eskridge to Jackson, p. 338; Will of George Eskridge, 27 October 1735, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 8, pp. 349-350.

<sup>5</sup> Eskridge advertisement, Virginia Gazette (Parks), 7 April 1738, p. 4, c. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Eskridge to Jackson, p. 338.

<sup>7</sup> The first appearance of the name "Wilton" is in the Inventory of Richard Jackson II Estate, 6 October 1787, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 6, pp. 522-523.

<sup>8</sup> Analysis of advertisements in the Virginia Gazette indicate that planters designated dwellings as "for an overseer" not only when an overseer was in residence but also when the structure was considered too shoddy or run-down for any other purpose. See Chapters 2 and 3 for more on this topic.

similar in its bright pattern glazing to that of nearby Yeocomico Church, which was first completed in 1706 but was substantially enlarged around 1740.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the use of variegated brickwork for decorative effect had generally fallen from favor among the Virginia builders of expensive houses by the middle of the century.<sup>10</sup>

Upon his death, Richard Jackson's house and plantation descended to his son Richard Jackson II, who lived at Wilton until his death in 1787. Neither Jackson left a will, although both estates were subsequently inventoried. Leaving aside the possibility that both teams of court-appointed appraisers were somehow casual in a consistent way, the impression conveyed by these two documents is that the Jacksons occupied their big house in the most desultory fashion. Both the 1767 and the 1787 inventory record the presence of only one set of fireplace equipage--shovel, tongs, andirons--although the house has always contained seven fireplaces.<sup>11</sup> Richard Jackson II and his wife also appear to have done little more than continue using his father's acquisitions, for most of the furnishings listed in the 1767 inventory make encore appearances in the inventory of 1787. Furthermore, while the estates of both men were appraised at just over £1000, a larger proportion of the son's personal wealth was represented by his slaves. Household accoutrements comprised only 28 percent of his wealth, while those

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<sup>9</sup> The dates for Yeocomico Church are taken from Dell Upton, Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia (New York and Cambridge: Architectural History Foundation and MIT Press, 1986), pp. 66-69.

<sup>10</sup> Calder Loth, "Notes on the Evolution of Virginia Brickwork from the Seventeenth Century to the Late Nineteenth Century," APT Bulletin 6 (1974), pp. 82-120.

<sup>11</sup> By 1787 the andirons were broken. Jackson II Inventory, pp. 522-524.



of Richard Jackson I amounted to 36 percent of his personal worth.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, Wilton's five hundred acres earned the Jackson family a position among the wealthiest 8 percent of Westmoreland County households when land was first systematically taxed in 1782.<sup>13</sup>

Hannah Jackson, who inherited Wilton from her father in 1787, married James Cox in 1804.<sup>14</sup> The couple lived on the property until their deaths in the late 1830s and it is probably they who executed the Federal-style retrimming of Wilton's interior.<sup>15</sup> The inventory that was taken when James Cox died in 1837 suggests a more orderly distribution of room functions as well. Although Cox's household goods were not arranged under the heading of room names, the interspersing of mantel ornaments and such hearth tools as pokers, bellows, and tongs indicate how the main floor of the dwelling was organized. There was a hall or parlor where stood a new settee amidst the dining tables and case furniture that Hannah Jackson Cox had inherited from her father. A dining room contained the most expensive furniture at Wilton, including a new mahogany

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<sup>12</sup> The twenty-two slaves Richard Jackson I owned at his death accounted for £641 of his total worth of £1006. Richard Jackson II has a personal estate valued at £125 of which £906 was represented by his twenty-five slaves. Inventory of Richard Jackson I Estate, 29 May 1764, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 4, pp. 194-196; Jackson II Inventory, pp. 522-524.

<sup>13</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1782, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>14</sup> The first documentary indication that Hannah Jackson was the heir is in her marriage bond with James Cox of 1804, in which she is identified as "Hannah Jackson of Wilton." Westmoreland County Marriage Bonds 5, p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> Will of James Cox, 7 February 1837, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 29, p. 191; Will of Hannah Jackson Cox, 26 March 1838, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 29, p. 360. Both documents mention that Henry Newton Cox was to inherit Wilton.

sideboard and a set of mahogany dining tables.<sup>16</sup> The third room was furnished as a chamber. Several additional beds, bedsteads, and furniture--but only one set of fireplace equipage--were distributed among the four rooms on the second floor.<sup>17</sup>

Ten years after the death of his parents, Henry Newton Cox and his wife sold Wilton to Dr. Wat Tyler of Warsaw in Richmond County.<sup>18</sup> Tyler lived at Wilton through the Civil War, and he is probably responsible for updating the east room with new Greek Revival woodwork. But in 1866 a deed of trust he had made to cover debts was foreclosed, and the property was sold at auction to John Mayo.<sup>19</sup> Two years later, Mayo conveyed Wilton to James Dall Arnest, a grandson of the Arnest family at Nomini Hall, who had made a substantial fortune as a merchant in Philadelphia.<sup>20</sup>

Before moving his family to Wilton, Arnest remodeled the house. Willoughby Brown Howe, who visited Wilton often as a child, later described and sketched the changes. Arnest enlarged the northwest room for use as a dining room and added a contiguous china closet. He installed a stylish stone mantel in the east room which became,

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<sup>16</sup> It is tempting to conclude that the Coxes arranged this expensive dining furniture in the large east room, but this end of the house never had the sort of side-door access to a detached kitchen that was favored for rooms where the designated activity was eating. The Cox dining room was probably located in the southwest room, which has an original side doorway to the exterior.

<sup>17</sup> Inventory of James Cox Estate, 7 March 1837, Westmoreland County Record/Inventory Book 19, pp. 109-111.

<sup>18</sup> Cox to Tyler, 17 October 1848, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 33, p. 74.

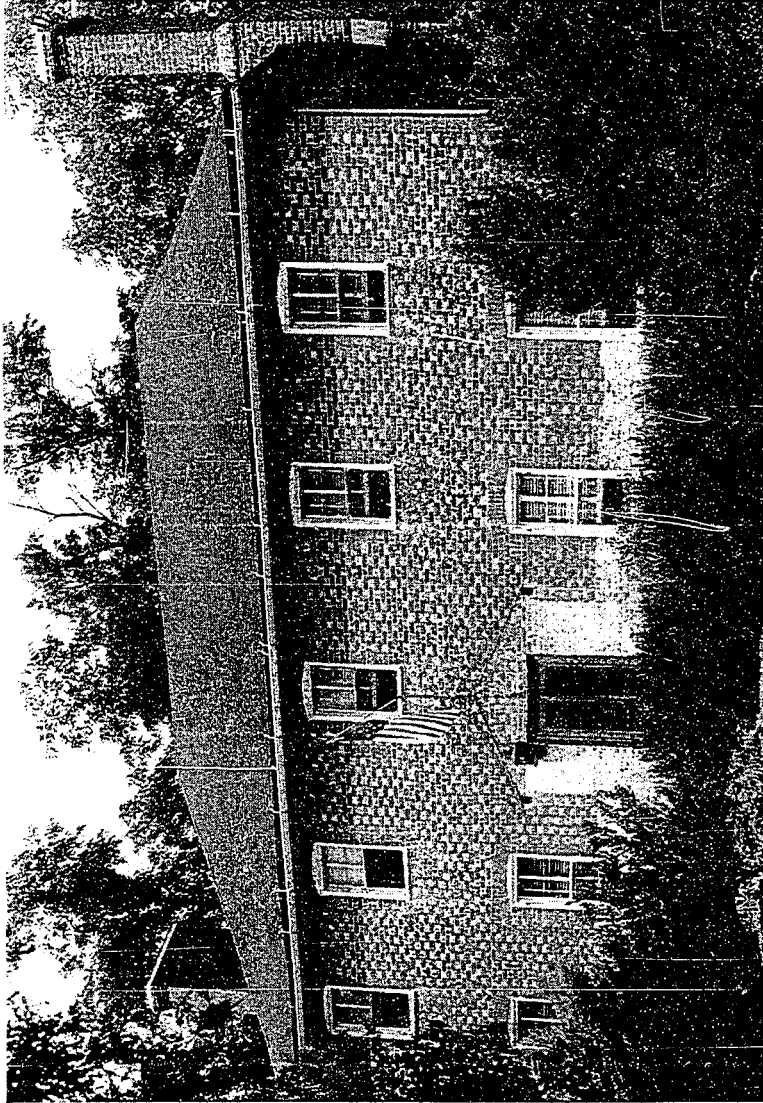
<sup>19</sup> Tyler to Robert Mayo, 27 June 1859, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 36, p. 238; Robert Mayo to John Mayo, 18 August 1866, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 37, pp. 221-223.

<sup>20</sup> Mayo to Arnest, 9 December 1868, Westmoreland County Deed/Will Book 38, p. 149.

if it had not been before, a true parlor in the Victorian sense. The small southwest corner of the main floor was used as an informal sitting room.<sup>21</sup> Although Willoughby Howe did not mention such an addition, Arnest was probably also responsible for the first incarnation of the kitchen wing on the west end of the house.

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<sup>21</sup> Howe, "This I Remember."



Wilton, Westmoreland County, Virginia. (Photo, Camille Wells.)

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Born October 3, 1952 in Anchorage, Alaska, Camille Wells grew up in Canton, North Carolina. She graduated with honors in history from Wake Forest University in 1974 and received the M.A. degree in Architectural History from the University of Virginia in 1976. She worked as an architectural surveyor for the Kentucky Heritage Commission from 1976 until 1980, when she accepted a position with the Department of Architectural Research at Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. In September of 1981 she entered the doctoral program in the Department of History at the College of William and Mary, where she served as a graduate assistant and a teaching fellow. In 1988, she accepted the Associate Fellowship in Material Culture at William and Mary's Commonwealth Center for the Study of American Culture. She has also served as an adjunct faculty member for the Program in American Studies at the College of William and Mary and the Department of Historic Preservation at Mary Washington College. Wells was a founder of the Vernacular Architecture Forum and she established and edited the first two volumes, published in 1982 and 1986, of the series Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture. Her most recent publications are "The Planter's Prospect: Houses, Outbuildings, and Rural Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Winterthur Portfolio 28 (Spring 1993) and "Interior Designs: Room Furnishings and Historical Interpretations at Colonial Williamsburg," Southern Quarterly 31 (Spring 1993). In September of 1993, Wells joined the faculty of the Department of Architectural History at the University of Virginia's School of Architecture.